

HINTS
ON
DANIEL
—
H. BURTON



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HINTS ON DANIEL.

HINTS

ON THE

BOOK OF DANIEL.

BY

ALFRED H. BURTON

(*Editor of "The Christian's Library"*).

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PREFACE.



THE book now in the reader's hands consists of papers that appeared in the *Christian's Library*. It has been thought desirable to issue them in one volume, which is now sent forth with the earnest prayer that it may in some small degree be helpful to a right understanding of this most interesting portion of Holy Scripture.

Jan. 1903.

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Hints on Daniel.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

THE study of the inspired history of God's ancient people Israel is humbling in the extreme, for it is one of the many instances which go to prove that man, however privileged, when placed in responsibility invariably fails.

When read in connection with the prophetic word, it is nevertheless most encouraging to faith, for it teaches us how God is ever faithful, and that, in spite of human failure, He will yet glorify Himself in the blessing of His unworthy people.

But, failure having come in, before God in grace can establish them in blessing, He must first of all in government pass them under His chastening rod. Grace and government are thus two important principles of God's dealings with His own. It is ever blessedly true that God is always and entirely *for* His people in grace, though for a time He may appear to act *against*

them in His government. It is thus that the Book of Daniel opens.

Things had sunk to a fearfully low level even in Judah. Every careful reader of the Books of Kings and Chronicles will remember how speedily after the separation of the ten tribes did these (commonly called *Israel*, in contrast to *Judah*) turn to idolatry. The oft-repeated sentence, "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin," is sadly familiar to our ears, for it was this wicked King of Israel who led the ten tribes into idolatry.

For a time Judah and Benjamin remained faithful, but, alas! they too fell into the same sin, until at length of Manasseh we are told that he "seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel" (2 Kings xxi. 9).

It was then that the prophetic warnings began to fall upon the ears of the people. Indeed the prophetic office seems always to have been connected with the failure of the people of God. This is a principle which runs through both the Old and New Testaments. As soon as ruin and declension have set in, then the Lord speaks by His servants the prophets, warning all who have an ear to hear of those righteous judgments which must fall if disobedience be persisted in, and holding out to faith bright promises of blessing upon repentance.

But the Book of Daniel has a peculiar character about it. It is not addressed to the people as a whole, it is a communication made to Daniel himself about that people. In others of the prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, God addressed Himself directly to the people themselves, through the prophet, no doubt, who constantly thundered in their ears the well-known words, "Thus saith the Lord."

"Higher criticism" has stumbled here as everywhere else. Rationalists have been at marvellous pains to scrutinise the Bible. They are more familiar with the letter than multitudes of true believers, but, destitute of the Spirit, they utterly fail in understanding what they read. This is one out of the many cases in point. They have observed the omission of what Dean Farrar is pleased to call "the mighty formula of, Thus saith the Lord," and have used this as evidence of what they call the "late date" theory. But their infidelity was the parent of their criticism. They had decided beforehand that Daniel was not a prophet, and this in face of what the Lord Jesus Christ had said in Matthew xxiv. 15. Daniel was an *historian*, say they, and not a *prophet*. "Not once does he use the mighty formula!"

The fact is, the words "Thus saith the Lord," would have been entirely inconsistent with the character of the book. As we have before

observed, God does not here address His people as such ; the time had gone by for this. According to the announcement of Hosea, nearly two hundred years previously, "Lo-Ammi" (not My people) was the solemn sentence now written upon them. On account of their persistent idolatry, continued in through long lines of kings, persevered in notwithstanding ample prophetic warnings, and culminating in Manasseh, who "set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David, and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put My name for ever" (2 Chron. xxxiii. 7)—on account of all this, Jehovah was moved to jealousy, and He refused any longer to recognise Israel as His people. Lo-Ammi is the sentence. A crisis, long threatening, had now been reached in the history of the nation.

Even in Isaiah's time, about one hundred and fifty years earlier, things in Israel had come to a terrible pass. Uzziah's rash act in entering the temple of the Lord to burn incense, which by the law of Jehovah was allowed to the priests alone, who were consecrated for this very thing (2 Chron. xxvi.), was speedily followed by the glaring idolatry of Ahaz (2 Chron. xxviii.). Isaiah was then called forth, and addresses the solemn warnings of judgment to the consciences of the people, while at the same time appealing

to their hearts and causing to pass before their vision bright pictures of future blessing, despised by them in the prophet's day, but destined yet to be accomplished when the Branch shall grow out of the root of Jesse (Isaiah xi.).

The Kings of Judah had "forsaken the Lord," they had "provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger" (Isa. i. 4); but though provoked, He forgave, and though forsaken by the people, He did not yet forsake them. He addresses them still as His people through His servant Isaiah: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider" (i. 3). "**My people**," let this be compared with the language of Daniel, *e.g.*, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy (*i.e.*, Daniel's) people" (Dan. ix. 24); compare also Daniel x. 14, and xii. 1. In these instances the Lord does not speak of them as His people, but as *Daniel's*. Lo-Ammi (not My people) was the sentence now written upon them. This is a most solemn reflection, and indispensable for a right understanding of the book.

Another evidence of the same kind is found in the title that Jehovah frequently assumes throughout the book, viz., "The God of heaven" (see especially chap. ii.). In the Book of Joshua He is seen as the "Lord of all the earth" (Josh. iii.) going before His people, and driving out the Canaanites before them in order to establish His redeemed people in the land of

promise. But now that very people have "sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan"; the land, God's land, has become "polluted with blood." "Therefore was the wrath of the Lord kindled against His people, insomuch that He abhorred His own inheritance" (Ps. cvi.). He withdraws from active intervention on behalf of His people; "the throne of the Lord" which had been set up at Jerusalem amidst all the glories of Solomon's day (1 Chron. xxix.) is now removed from the earth, dominion is given into the hands of the Gentiles, and, with Nebuchadnezzar, "the times of the Gentiles" (Luke xxi.) commence.

Daniel is the prophet of the times of the Gentiles, and not merely of the days of Antiochus, as the higher critics would have it.

THE FAITHFUL CAPTIVE.

(DAN. i.)

THE first verse of chapter i. contains what Dean Farrar tells us "seems to be a remarkable error"! The error, however, is in the mind of the objector, not in the Scripture.

We do not wish to occupy our readers with the irreverent reasonings of professed Christian ministers. They have been refuted over and over again by men as learned as those who pretend to a learning unhampered, as they tell us, by orthodox belief. True it is that we are living in days of rapidly increasing infidelity, but God has been pleased to give testimony to the accuracy of His Word, which leaves men without excuse if they disbelieve it. After all the laborious efforts of the Higher Critics to undermine the inspiration of the Old Testament in general, and of Daniel in particular, absolutely nothing has been advanced but what has long since been answered, and it is presuming upon the ignorance or the indolence of their readers to keep dishing up afresh their stale arguments.

Rationalists tell us that there was no siege of Jerusalem in the third year of Jehoiakim, at least they do not *think* there was! Scripture affirms that there was. We have no hesitation

in saying that we prefer to go by the Scripture. Without preface or introduction, the book of Daniel opens with a simple record of the fact that the King of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. Isaiah had long before predicted it. "Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house . . . shall be carried to Babylon; and of thy sons . . . shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the King of Babylon" (Isa. xxxix.). Those days, alas for Israel! had come. "The Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand" (Dan. i. 2).

With what solemn significance these words sound upon our ears! "The Lord gave." Was it not the same Lord that, with an outstretched hand, had brought His people out of the house of bondage in Egypt? Yes. Was it not the same that had carried them as on eagle's wings through a vast howling wilderness? Was it not the same that had led them triumphantly into the land of Canaan, and had displaced nations more numerous and mightier than they? It was. "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt . . . but My people would not hearken to My voice: and Israel would none of Me. . . . Oh that My people had hearkened unto Me, and Israel had walked in My ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned My hand against their adversaries" (Psalm lxxxi.).

But if Judah's king had turned a deaf ear

to all Jehovah's entreaties, and if the state of the nation as a whole was such that God can no longer publicly identify Himself with them, yet individual faith can walk in a path of obedience and separation to God as much as in the brightest days of David and Solomon.

The King of Judah lay bound with fetters in Babylon, the vessels of the house of the Lord were stored in an idol's temple, the wall of Jerusalem was broken down and burnt with fire; yea, more, the chief priests were the ring-leaders in rebellion, they had filled the Lord's house with the abominations of the heathen, they had mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and misused His prophets (2 Chron. xxxvi.), and yet do we read that "Daniel purposed in his heart" to keep himself as separate from all the defilements of Babylon as ever it would have been possible to do in Jerusalem itself. It might have seemed a small matter to eat of the King of Babylon's meat, the natural man might even have reasoned that it was expedient so to do, but Daniel was guided by the word of the Lord. Such scriptures as Exodus xxxiv. 15, Leviticus xix. 26, and Hosea ix. 3, must have acted powerfully upon his conscience. He might have to stand alone in his faithfulness, he might be misunderstood by all his fellow-captives in Babylon, but his decision was made, he set the Lord before him, and he soon found

that He placed Himself at his right hand to help him.

This first chapter of Daniel is a sort of introduction to the whole book, but it contains moral principles of the utmost importance, and most encouraging to faith in days of general declension and failure. Though the dispensation in which the child of God finds himself may change, yet it is ever true that "them that honour Me I will honour" (1 Sam. ii. 32). We are all apt to be depressed in days of ruin, and to give up as hopeless all attempt to maintain a walk consistent with the claims of God and His Word, but not so with Daniel. There was heart and conscience work with him. In the words of another, "Daniel is faithful in all that constitutes a complete separation from the world, according to the Jewish rites, in refusing to eat of meats from the table of a pagan monarch; and this conduct of faith . . . meets the approval of God."

It may be well to observe in passing that there is nothing inconsistent with divine principles that what, in the matter of meats, was peremptorily forbidden to Daniel, should be permissible to the Christian. The dispensation was different. Daniel was under law, and what was required in him was strict and unqualified obedience to its every detail. In Daniel's day this obedience was beset with unwonted difficulties, but nevertheless he braced himself up, not in his own

strength, but in that of the Lord his God, and he faced the consequences be they what they might.

When Christianity was brought in, other motives were introduced: "Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake" (1 Cor. x. 25). At Corinth the saints of God were living surrounded by heathen idolaters, and the meat that was sold in the market was, in all probability, a part of what had been offered to an idol. Nevertheless the Christian man's conscience was relieved from all anxiety on that score. An idol to him was nothing: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." Asking no question, he might freely eat. The case is even supposed of a Christian bidden to a feast at the house of a heathen man (1 Cor. x. 27). Here, too, difficult as the case might be, the Christian man was free to eat, asking no question. But if he were distinctly told that what was set before him had been offered in sacrifice to idols, then he was not to eat out of consideration for the conscience of the other.

A careful study of 1 Corinthians viii. and x. upon this point will show that, where an intelligent Christian might have perfect liberty to eat, yet the grace of Christ would ever lead such to consider the consciences of others, and to refrain from that which might be any cause of stumbling to a weak brother. It would lead us too far

from our subject to enlarge upon these interesting and important passages of Scripture.

Daniel, in the matter of the king's meat, owed obedience to a higher authority than Nebuchadnezzar ; rather than yield in this, which was a plain case of obedience to the law of Jehovah, he braved the wrath of the despotic ruler of Babylon. But in the matter of the change of name he has to submit, painful as the ordeal must have been. He was a captive slave, and hence had to yield to his master in all matters that did not conflict with his allegiance to God. Satan's effort was to obliterate from the minds of Daniel and his faithful companions all recollection of the true God, and to substitute a familiarity with the names of the gods of the heathen. A concordance will show that *Daniel* means "God's judge" — *Hananiah*, "Whom Jehovah graciously gave" — *Mishael*, "Who is what God is?" — *Azariah*, "Whom Jehovah aids." In place of these suggestive names, the prince of the eunuchs bestows upon them names taken from the idols of Babylon (*see* Dan. iv. 8).

But they had set the Lord before them, and God in His providence interposes marvellously on their behalf. He brought them into favour in the court of Babylon, and gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom which far exceeded that of the magicians and astrologers, which were in all the king's realm.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM.

(DAN. ii. 1-14.)

THE last verse of Daniel i. is evidence of the prefatory character of the first chapter of the book.

"Daniel continued unto the first year of King Cyrus" (i. 21). This does not mean that he died in that year, for chapter vi. 28 informs us that he prospered "in the reign of Cyrus the Persian," and chapter x. 1 describes what was revealed to Daniel "in the third year of Cyrus, King of Persia." But he lived until the introduction of the first of the three great empires, which he was given of God in prophetic vision to see would follow the Babylonian. Not only so; but God gave him to witness, on the one hand, the fulfilment of His word through Jeremiah that spoke of the seventy years' captivity in Babylon (see Jer. xxv. 11); and on the other, the equal fulfilment of that same word that foretold the return to Jerusalem at the close of the seventy years (Jer. xxv. 12, xxix. 10). What God warns of in judgment He will infallibly bring to pass; what He promises in mercy will likewise as certainly be fulfilled. "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He

spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Num. xxiii. 19). Oh! that men would heed this solemn, yet encouraging truth.

With the second chapter the distinctly prophetic part of the book commences, and this, we shall see, is divided into two portions of almost equal length. The first, extending to the end of chapter vi., is especially occupied with a description of the conduct and characters of the great Gentile powers; whereas the second, from chapter vii. to the end, enters into particulars concerning these same powers, which more closely connect themselves with the condition of the Jewish people in the last days.

Hence it is that in the first portion the dreams and visions are not Daniel's, though he alone was able to interpret them. God was addressing Himself to the conscience of Nebuchadnezzar, letting him know, what was to befall, not only the Babylonian, but those three succeeding empires, until, in the latter days, all the power and glory of man would be laid low before Him whose kingdom would "never be destroyed." If God is going to judge, as according to Scripture He most certainly will, all the great systems of the world, political, social, and religious, He takes care to give ample warning, so as to leave man without excuse. Let the world take heed in time, and before the judgment falls! Let the Christian, while he reads the prophetic Scriptures, keep himself apart

in heart and life from the world that is hurrying on to its doom! Thus and thus only will he be able to give any ray of light for Christ amidst the increasing moral darkness of the last days. Lot was no help to any one in Sodom. He had linked himself too closely with all its interests. Christian reader, may one great lesson that we shall learn from our study of this portion of God's Word be to "keep ourselves unspotted from the world"!]

Had not Daniel "purposed in his heart" to maintain a holy separation to God from all the abominations of Babylon, he never would have been chosen to be the vehicle of the communication of such stupendous revelations. In like manner, no worldly-minded Christian will ever rightly understand this or any other part of the prophetic Scriptures. In the words of another: "The personal behaviour of Daniel is the basis of and introduction to the revelation of the whole book. It is the same with us. Separation from the world—a decided refusal to have our portion in that which it furnishes—puts us into a position to receive those communications from God which, whilst their fulness is contained in the written Word, we never receive but through the direct teaching of God, whatever be the instrument which God may make use of to impart such communications to us."

But God has not only words of warning for the world, pointing them on to that which will

end up all that now, to the eye of man, looks so fair and promising; He has also words of encouragement for His people, even though, for a time, He was forced to abhor His own inheritance, and to give them into the hand of the heathen (Ps. cvi.). So it is that we find in the second section of the book visions of which Daniel himself was the recipient, and which especially concern his own people. The true character of the great Gentile powers is most forcibly delineated; their hostility to God and His people in the last days—days yet to come—are clearly made known; and the judgment that will eventually overtake the future representatives of the last two of these great empires is described in marvellous detail, for it is they that are more immediately concerned in the history of the Jewish people in the latter days.

Consistent with this twofold division of the book, it is of interest to observe that the language used in the first section differs from that found in the second. From chapter ii. 4 to chapter vii. 28, the original language is Syriac or Chaldee; whereas from chapter viii. 1 to the end of the book it is Hebrew. This is most remarkable, and yet most natural. Syriac was the language with which the Babylonians were familiar, and as the communications of this part of the book chiefly concerned them, God gave them in the language which was current amongst them, whereas the Hebrew of the second portion was

just as suitable there, when we remember that the visions described had reference chiefly to the Jews. How perfect are all the ways of God!

Nebuchadnezzar "dreamed a dream." God was making known to him "what shall be in the latter days;" He likewise brought home to the proud monarch the utter weakness of all human wisdom. The dream went from him, and Babylon's wise men were called in to make known to him the interpretation of the thing, but they stand helpless and dismayed before the unreasonable demand of the cruel and furious despot.

"There is not a man upon earth," they truly exclaim, "that can show the king's matter" (ver. 10); but Daniel's God was "in heaven" (ver. 28). And that God who had just turned backward the wise men of Babylon, and made their knowledge foolish, was just as certainly going to confirm "the word of His servant," and "perform the counsel of His messengers" (Isa. xliv. 25, 26).

For however much Israel as a nation had failed, God was true to His own word, "Them that honour Me I will honour" (1 Sam. ii. 30). If for their unfaithfulness Israel was carried away captive to Babylon, a faithful Daniel will be honoured of the Lord in the land of his exile. For no matter how low the people of God may sink, nothing changes His *love* towards them.

The heathen monarch might have reasoned that because He had allowed them to be carried away captive, therefore He had ceased to love them, but at the very start he is taught the lesson that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him" (Ps. xxv. 14). In the words of another: "Their conqueror must be taught that, after all, the *mind*—the *heart* of God, was with the poor captives. The *power* of God might be with the Gentile for a season, but the affections of God and His secret were with His own, even in the hour of their abasement."

THE SECRET REVEALED.

(DAN. ii. 14-36.)

"THEY sought Daniel and his fellows to be slain" (chap. ii. 13). It might have seemed to them as though their God had forsaken them, and that an easier and safer path would have been theirs had they only not taken such a decided stand for God. Their very faithfulness had exposed them to greater danger than others of their fellow-captives (chap. i. 17-20).

But Daniel was not only faithful to God and His word in an evil day, he had *faith in God*. He knew that the knowledge and understanding that he possessed was not merely the result of human wisdom, but came from "a God in heaven" who "knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him" (ii. 22). And faith always produces *confidence*. Daniel goes in before Nebuchadnezzar and desires of him time, adding that "he would show the king the interpretation" (ii. 16). He expresses no doubt whatever, but calm in the assurance of God's favour, he boldly faces the infuriated monarch, even as later on he braves the lions' den.

But the confidence of faith is confidence not in man, however wise, but in God; and such

confidence will always express its *dependence* on God in prayer. "Daniel went to his house" (ii. 17), but not alone, for he sought out his three companions that they might join him in desiring "mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret."

God heard and God answered. "Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision," and prayer is turned to praise. "Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven."

"The God of heaven." This title is characteristic of the book of Daniel, and most consistent with the fact before noted, that the prophet is living during the period of the nation's history when *Lo-Ammi* (not My people) was written upon them. Those glorious days were over when God identified Himself with His people, and went before their victorious armies as "the Lord of all the earth" (Josh. iii. 11, 13). The nation had turned in their apostasy to idols, and Jehovah takes the distant place of "the God of heaven." But in spite of all the unfaithfulness of the nation, He responds, as we have seen, to individual faith.

It is beautiful to notice the attitude of Daniel's soul. When the secret was revealed, instead of rushing in immediately before the king, he goes straight into the presence of God, and pours forth his heart in praise and thanksgiving. He owns Him as the One to whom all power belongs in the government of this world. "He

removeth kings, and setteth up kings" (ii. 21), but not only this, "He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding."

A principle of immense importance is contained in these last words, and the frequency with which the passage is misquoted sufficiently proves how many have failed to grasp it. How often we hear it said that God giveth knowledge to them that "have no understanding." While this may be perfectly true in one sense, the very reverse is stated in Daniel ii. 21. God may be very pitiful of our ignorance, but there is an ignorance which results from unwillingness to do His will. ¶ To carry out in practice the truth of God will always entail suffering to the flesh, and this we are not always prepared for. ¶ Many desire to understand Scripture in an intellectual manner who shrink from living it out. But of this we may rest assured, that God's principle is, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John vii. 17), and not otherwise. And again, "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matt. vi. 22). Oh, for the single eye!

The great need amongst the people of God to-day is to seek the glory of the Lord with an undivided heart. So long as there is a reserve in the soul, and an unwillingness to carry out in practice the revealed will of God, there will, there *can be* no progress in the knowledge of

the truth. This applies to prophecy as well as to every other part of Scripture, as the passage before our notice clearly shows, "He giveth wisdom to *the wise*," not to the ignorant, "and knowledge to them that know understanding. He revealeth the deep and secret things." May the Lord produce in the heart of both reader and writer a deep and true desire to do His will at whatever cost!

Daniel is brought in before the king, and it is beautiful to see the humility with which he bears himself. "Art thou able to make known unto me the dream?" asks the king. "There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days," is Daniel's calm reply. Daniel makes no parade of his knowledge, but hides himself in order to magnify his God before the eyes of the heathen monarch.

"He that revealeth secrets" was unfolding in the vision of the night the course of this world's empire with special reference to the "latter days" (ii. 28). The proud Babylonian conqueror, elated with his many victories, his mind reeling with the successes which had attended his armies, beheld in a dream the mapping out of the future of the great Gentile powers. God, a God that he knew not, was speaking to him in a dream, in a vision of the night, not only to reveal to him "what shall come to pass," but also that he

might know the thoughts of his own heart (ii. 30).

May God, that same God, speak to our hearts likewise! And may He, by His Spirit, apply to our consciences the solemn truths we are about to examine! May the bright rays of light, which God has been pleased to vouchsafe to us through the prophetic word in reference to the future of this poor world, so shine upon our path in this dark scene, as to separate us from the whole course of this present age!

The world is surely and rapidly going on to its judgment. May we each one be more alive to the solemnity of these things!

THE GREAT IMAGE.

(DAN. ii. 31-46.)

"THOU, O king, sawest, and behold a great image." God was pleased to give the Gentile monarch a vision of the future. No wonder that "his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him," as he beheld "this great image whose brightness was excellent . . . and the form thereof terrible."

No human power could recall the forgotten dream; no human wisdom could interpret it. But the God of heaven was mapping out before the astonished and frightened king the whole course of "the times of the Gentiles" alluded to by our Lord in Luke xxi. 24.

Few who have given any serious attention to the study of the subject have any difficulty in understanding to what the different parts of the great image refer. The interpretation given by Daniel removes all difficulty as to the head of gold. "Thou" — addressing Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonish king—"art this head of gold" (ii. 38). We shall see that while beyond all question the first great empire of "the times of the Gentiles" is here distinctly shown to be the Babylonian, Scripture makes it equally plain which are those that follow.

There are four in all. The first is *Babylon*. Not that there had not been vast and magnificent empires before ever Babylon was heard of, *e.g.*, Assyria and Egypt. But they do not enter into the scope of Daniel's prophecy. When we advance further in our study of the book, we shall see that there are two great classes of prophets in the Old Testament; first, those like Isaiah, who address themselves directly to the Jewish nation, while the nation is still owned of God; second, those like Daniel, who are called to their prophetic office when the nation is outwardly disowned. In the first, we shall find much more about the Assyrian; in the second, more about Babylon and the Gentile powers that followed Babylon. The Assyrian is the enemy of Israel when recognised of God in their own land; and although the great Assyrian empire has long since passed away, prophecy distinctly reveals that the Assyrian will be revived in the last great crisis before the setting up of that kingdom of Christ which "shall stand for ever." Israel will yet be restored to their own land; they will there be recognised again by God as His people (Hos. i., ii.), and in that day the Assyrian will once more come forward as their antagonist (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.). This will be after the coming of the Lord for His saints.

Daniel is the prophet of "the times of the Gentiles." He by no means confines himself to

a description of the days of Antiochus Epiphanes as the "Higher Critics" would have us to believe. These "times of the Gentiles" began with the deportation to Babylon. The throne of the Lord was then removed from Jerusalem, and power was given into the hands of the Gentiles. These "times" still continue, and will until the Lord comes out of heaven in judgment. Then once more will the Jewish nation be owned. These things will become clearer as we proceed with our examination of the Book of Daniel.

But the Babylonian empire was not to last long. Jeremiah had been given to foretell that after seventy years (Jer. xxv.) the power of Babylon should be broken; and here in Daniel's interpretation of the great king's dream we are told, "After thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee" (ii. 39).

Nothing could equal the magnificence of Babylon so long as it lasted. History has given us amazing records of its glory and prosperity. Nebuchadnezzar had received his grant of power direct from God Himself. "The God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory." Of none of the succeeding empires is this said. Universal dominion, so far as man's connection with earth and heaven are concerned, was placed in his hand. The following chapters show how this power was abused. One only, He who is both God and

man, the Son of man, will rule over a wider dominion than that which was entrusted to Nebuchadnezzar. "All things" in earth, heaven, and sea will be put "under His feet," and He will reign in righteousness (Ps. viii.). Absolute monarchy in the hands of fallen and sinful man invariably leads to cruel tyranny and unbridled lust; when Christ shall reign "the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever" (Isa. xxxii. 17). Lord, haste that day for this groaning creation!

But the God of heaven "removeth kings and setteth up kings," and so the astonished king is informed by the very God who had given him all his greatness, "After thee shall arise another kingdom." This was to be "inferior to thee," in *splendour* and magnificence, but not in *extent*, for it "shall bear rule over all the earth." It was none other than the Medo-Persian.

While it is most interesting to see how all history *confirms*, as of course it must, the prophetic Scriptures; yet we do not need to go outside of the Bible for the *explanation*. Not only did God foretell through Jeremiah the *duration* of the Babylonian empire, "It shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon," &c. (Jer. xxv. 12), He also distinctly informs us of the *succession* of its various kings. "All nations shall serve him (*i.e.*, Nebuchadnezzar),

and his son, and his son's son" (Jer. xxvii. 7). Now in Daniel v. it was the last of these three, Belshazzar, that was on the throne of Babylon. But on that terrible night his "kingdom was divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (Dan. v. 28). History confirms this, but Daniel was inspired of God to write it before the event took place.

In process of time the Medo-Persian empire passed away. It lasted longer than the Babylonian (B.C. 536-333), but was eventually crushed by the armies of Alexander the Great. History tells us this, but Scripture was beforehand giving us the *name* of the third empire even before the second had risen into power. "The ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia. And the rough goat is the king of Grecia" (Dan. viii. 20, 21).

We have then in the Book of Daniel itself the names of three out of the four great Gentile powers—(1) Babylon; (2) Medo-Persia; and (3) Grecia.

But God was not merely gratifying the curiosity of Nebuchadnezzar, He was dealing with his conscience. It was especially the things that should take place "in the latter days" (ii. 28) that God was bringing before him; and hence much more is told us in reference to the *fourth* kingdom, than any of the other three. Can there be any reasonable doubt as to which this fourth kingdom is?

As far back as B.C. 1452 (*i.e.*, three thousand three hundred and fifty years ago!) God used the lips of Balaam, who for filthy lucre's sake would fain have cursed God's chosen earthly people, to foretell the blessed day of Israel's redemption. He saw in vision the coming kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do not the stirring events of the present hour give ground to think that that glorious moment is near at hand? "Out of Jacob shall come He (Christ) that shall have dominion" (Num. xxiv. 19).

Space will not permit of any lengthy exposition of this prophecy, the most remarkable in all Scripture, when we remember its early date, its wide scope, and its perfect accord with all other parts of the prophetic word! It foretells the crumbling to pieces of all earth's kingdoms before Him who is presently coming in judgment to set up a kingdom "which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. vii. 14). We can do no more than quote the passage and commend it to the reader's prayerful consideration: — "And he looked on the Kenites, and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou puttest thy nest in a rock. Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee (*i.e.*, Israel) away captive. And he took up his parable, and said, Alas! who shall live when God doeth this? And ships shall come from the coast (or *side*) of Chittim (*i.e.*, Cyprus), and shall afflict Asshur, and shall afflict Eber (*i.e.*, the

country beyond the river Euphrates), and he (*i.e.*, Chittim) also shall perish for ever" (Num. xxiv. 21-25).

It is the power spoken of under the term of "the coast of Chittim" that is the fourth kingdom of Daniel's great image. Without naming it Balaam foretells the quarter from whence it was to come—a mighty *Western* power, which was to come into conflict with the *Eastern* empire of the world, but in the end to be destroyed itself. It was the *Roman* empire, which in Balaam's day had no existence whatever. It had not even been heard of when Daniel wrote.

We see to-day an immense Eastern empire in process of formation. Scripture is clear as to the place Russia is to fill in the coming crisis of the world. The revived Roman empire will be antagonistic to it, but is doomed to perish before it.

THE STONE THAT SMOTE THE IMAGE.

(DAN. ii. 34-46.)

OLD Testament history closes about 400 years B.C. Malachi was the last writer, but Nehemiah records the last historical facts.

In the time of Nehemiah the second of the four great Gentile powers was still reigning supreme. The third, or Grecian, had not even been heard of in a united form except in the prophecy of Daniel (viii. 21). But the Scripture must be fulfilled, and so we learn from history that in process of time the Medo-Persian empire gave way before the headlong rush of Alexander the Great, "the great horn" of the he-goat (viii.). This will come before us later on in our study of the book.

Not only does the Old Testament foretell the rise of the fourth empire, but it distinctly intimates its geographical position in relation to the third. It is well known that Chittim in the Old Testament stands for Cyprus; and we have already seen that from "the side of Chittim" ships were to come to afflict Asshur. Chittim, therefore, lay west in reference to Asshur or Assyria.

The same expression, "the ships of Chittim," occurs in Dan. xi. 30. There it refers to the intervention of the same western power in the affairs of the same eastern power, the difference

being that while Dan. xi. 30 has already in measure been fulfilled, Num. xxiv. 24 alludes to what is yet to come.

No sooner do we open the New Testament than we find ourselves in presence of another great power of universal dominion. A decree goes forth from Cæsar Augustus, the Roman emperor, "That all the world should be taxed" (Luke ii. 1). Since the days in which Daniel wrote (about B.C. 607), history can tell us of no more than four universal empires. Scripture mentions them each by name. Once for all, then, let it be understood that the four parts of Nebuchadnezzar's image, as well as the four beasts of Dan. vii., refer to the four great Gentile powers :—

1. Babylon.
2. Medo-Persia.
3. Grecia.
4. Rome.

It was under the Roman that Christ was born, and all the world was set in motion to record the fact (Luke ii. 1, 2). It was while that same empire was at the height of its power that Christ was crucified, and that same empire will receive its last and crushing defeat when as KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS He will come forth in judgment (Rev. xix.). For though it has passed away as an imperial power it will be re-suscitated according to the clear predictions of Daniel and the Apocalypse.

There can be no question that "the beast" so frequently mentioned in the Apocalypse is the Roman empire. Perhaps some may ask, Where is it to-day? Has it not long since passed away? True, but Scripture leaves no room to doubt that it will revive. One text, and that a most remarkable one, is sufficient to refer to just now, In Rev. xvii. 8 we read, "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition," &c. Elsewhere* we have entered at length into this important subject, but it is clear from Scripture that presently the Roman empire will once more make its appearance in Europe, and the verse we have just referred to shows that when it revives it will derive all its power from Satan. Rev. xiii. 6 shows us what will be its impious and blasphemous character. A solemn picture this is indeed, and one which may well cause us serious reflections as we see the increasing godlessness of the times in which we live.

"The fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron," &c. (Dan. ii. 40). The description that follows gives in few words a marvellous picture of what the Roman empire was in the past and what it will be in the time to come, it may be so near at hand. Strength characterised it in its beginning in contrast to the grandeur of the eastern empires of Babylon and Persia. But eventually the

* *The Future of Europe*, JAMES CARTER, 13 Paternoster Row, E.C.

strength of the iron became mixed with clay, and the kingdom was divided. This no doubt refers to the inroad of barbaric hordes of which history speaks, and which became a source of weakness to the empire, at length causing its downfall.

When in the future the Roman empire makes its reappearance, that stage will be reached figured by the toes. The ten toes of the image in this chapter correspond to the ten horns of Dan. vii., and Rev. xiii. and xvii. In the last phase of the empire an extraordinary state of things will exist, hitherto unknown in Europe, namely, that while the empire will retain its unity under one imperial head, it will nevertheless be divided into ten kingdoms, each ruled over by a separate king. This is clear from Rev. xvii.

“And in the days of these kings”—let this expression be clearly noted—“shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed” (Dan. ii. 44). *This fifth kingdom will be the millennial kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

It may be that some of our readers have been under the impression that the kingdom of Christ here spoken of is the kingdom of grace (so-called), and that we are to see in “the stone cut out without hands” a figurative description of the gospel; but we are persuaded that while “the stone” undoubtedly refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, nevertheless it is not His birth and first coming in grace which is here to be understood, but His coming in power and judgment by-and-

bye. When Christ was born at Bethlehem the Roman empire was in all its undivided greatness and strength. Instead of His coming being its death-blow, it was under its direction that He was crucified.

Furthermore, Nebuchadnezzar was here given to see in vision what should be "*in the latter days*" (ii. 28). God, whose one great object in prophetic revelation is the glory of His Son, was carrying on the Gentile monarch's thoughts to the glorious day, when not merely a "little flock," as now, should own their absent and rejected Master's sway, but when "all people, nations, and languages should serve Him" (Dan. vii. 14).

Not the proclamation of the gospel, but the execution of judgment, will bring this about.

It is of all importance to note that it is "in the days of these kings," that is, in the last and yet future phase of the Roman empire, that "the stone" smites the image; it smites the image on *the feet*. "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors" (Dan. ii. 35).

Thus is graphically described in prophetic vision the close of "the times of the Gentiles"—times which began with Nebuchadnezzar, which still continue, but which will terminate when the Lord comes forth from heaven in judgment (Rev. xix. 11). Then will the nations of Israel be once

more taken up by God, and owned by Him ; for He who comes as the destroyer of the godless Gentile powers, will appear at the same time in Zion as a Deliverer, "and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Rom. xi. 26), and "so all Israel shall be saved."

These days are fast approaching. Gentile unbelief is rapidly ripening into full-blown apostasy. The nations of Western Europe are with feverish haste preparing for their last, their fiercest, and most awful conflict, when with one mind they shall give their power and strength unto the beast to make war with the Lamb. But "the Lamb shall overcome them" (Rev. xvii. 14), for "God hath put in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled" (Rev. xvii. 17).

"The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure" (Dan. ii. 45).

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S GOLDEN IMAGE.

(DAN. iii. 1-8.)

FEW chapters have been more violently attacked by modern criticism than the one which now lies open before us; and yet, remarkably enough, none have come through the fiery ordeal bearing such unmistakable evidence of its genuineness and divine inspiration.

Dean Farrar, that most reckless of critics, has ventured the judgment that it is "historic fiction superb in its imaginative grandeur." And yet, strange to say, he adds, "So far from slighting it, because it does not come before us with adequate evidence to prove that it was even intended to be taken as literal history, I have always regarded it as one of the most precious among the narrative chapters of Scripture." But inconsistency is a small matter compared to the treason against God and His Word which marks the infidelity of "higher criticism."

The contention of the Rationalists is that Daniel lived in Palestine and not at Babylon; that he flourished in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes (about B.C. 166), and not during the time of King Nebuchadnezzar (about B.C. 606);

that he was writing fiction, and not fact. The reader must choose between Scripture and scepticism ; he must put his confidence either in the unchanging Word of God, or the constantly shifting theories of men.

In this series of papers it is not our object to convince unbelieving gainsayers, but to help true believers to a right understanding of the Book so far as the Lord enables us. But there are many, especially amongst the young, who are somewhat stumbled by the positive assertions of those who "claim to know," and for their sakes we would say that all the objections raised against the genuineness of this chapter have no firmer foundation to rest on than the speculations and imaginings of the human mind, which is ever at enmity against God. It is interesting to know that one by one these objections have been proved groundless by the testimony of long buried monuments, and that everywhere this chapter bears unmistakable evidence of having been written in Babylon, and by one who must have lived at the time that Daniel claims to have flourished.

No Palestinian Jew in the days of Antiochus could possibly have had the intimate knowledge of Babylonian customs which is everywhere evident throughout this chapter. Even the very garments which were worn are described with an accuracy which would have been well-nigh impossible had the writer lived four cen-

turies after the time about which he was writing, as the critics affirm.*

In the first verse of our chapter we are told that Nebuchadnezzar set up his image "in the plain of Dura, in the province of *Babylon*." It is now known that there were two other Duras besides this one, and Daniel was not ignorant of the fact; it is most improbable that one living in the days of Antiochus could have had this knowledge. But Oppert, the great French assyriologist, has discovered what he considers to be the very site where once stood this colossal image. After describing the mound, *El-Mokattat*, he adds, "On seeing this mound one is immediately struck with the resemblance it presents to the pedestal of a colossal statue, . . . and everything leads to the belief that the statue mentioned in the book of Daniel (chap. iii. 1) was set up in this place." And further, "There is nothing incredible in the existence of a statue sixty cubits high and six cubits broad; moreover, the name of 'the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon' agrees also with the actual conformation of the ruin."

Little need now be said upon the subject of the Greek words found in Daniel. These

* On this and other matters connected with this subject we would refer our readers to an able and interesting defence of Daniel in a book entitled "The Inspiration and Accuracy of the Holy Scriptures," by John Urquhart. Price 7s. 6d.

were supposed to give conclusive evidence of its origin during the days of Alexander's Grecian empire. Professor Driver's argument runs thus : "The verdict of the language of Daniel is thus clear. The Persian words *presuppose* a period after the Persian empire had been well established ; the Greek words *demand*, the Hebrew *supports*, and the Aramaic *permits* a date after the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great (B.C. 332)." According to the Professor himself, the only real reason for giving up the orthodox belief as to the book lies in the fact that there are *Greek* words which, according to him, *demand* a later origin than that which Daniel pretends. The reader might imagine that Greek words bristled forth at every turn. Will it be believed that there are *only two* which are now said to be Greek, and these two are names of musical instruments? This absurd argument has long since been answered, but recent discoveries have brought to light that Greek musical instruments had found their way as far east as Nineveh in B.C. 650—that is to say, fifty years before the time of Nebuchadnezzar. It is a well-known fact that the name of an article travels with the article itself. Consequently, the presence of those two Greek words proves that the musical instruments in question were known in Babylon at that early date; they do not prove that the writer of the book must have lived in Palestine at a later date.

But the Christian needs no external evidence of the inspiration of Daniel. One word from the lips of Him whom he has learned to trust with all his heart, both for time and eternity, sweeps away as with one breath the whole structure upon which the higher critics so complacently have built their infidelity. In Matthew xxiv. 15 we hear the voice of the Lord Jesus affirming that Daniel was *a prophet*. The critics assert that Daniel was a writer of *fiction*, and at best a poor historian falsifying facts to suit pious ends. The Christian believes that he was recording absolute *facts* which contain deep, moral lessons, and that he was uttering inspired prophecies, *some* of which have been already fulfilled, *many* of which still remain to be fulfilled, and *all* of which were future when Daniel wrote them.

The Christ of God has said, "Daniel, *the prophet*," and with Him the critics have to do. It is our earnest prayer that many of them may have to do with Him *now*, and may their every thought be brought "into captivity to the obedience of Christ"! It is refreshing to read the following words from the pen of one who until recently was one of the foremost of them, but has been obliged from honest conviction to part company with them: "On the one side we have a body of doctrine, which has been the support in life and the refuge in death of millions of men of all nationalities and grades of mind,

which has been witnessed to by saints and martyrs. . . . On the other side there is a handful of critics, with their lists of words and polychromatic Bibles. And yet, the 'higher criticism' has never saved any souls or healed any bodies." *

* See *Contemporary Review*, October 1895. Article by Professor Sayce.

THE FIERY FURNACE.

(DAN. iii. 8-30.)

ONE of the saddest and most serious features of the times in which we are living is the widespread unbelief that exists in reference to the Scriptures.

Infidelity is not now confined to the bold attacks of the atheist, the sceptic, and the secularist. It is being diligently propagated by means of religious literature and pulpit ministration by men who pose as seekers after truth, and who make a pretence of dealing with the oracles of God in a most reverential spirit. Nothing is more deceptive to the vast majority of people than this.

Few have the ability to sift evidence or to weigh arguments. They are easily affected by an appearance of straightforwardness and a show of piety.

Then the Bible tells us some unpleasant truths. It speaks to the consciences of men. It is a relief to him who has not bowed in heart and conscience to its divine revelation to think that "good men and true" are not all agreed as to its absolute inerrancy. The Bible depicts man's condition morally before God to be as bad as it could possibly be. It describes the future of the unregenerate in language that,

if true, is enough to make one tremble. It hides not the fact of the sinner's utter ruin, yet at the same time reveals God's perfect but only remedy. But until that ruin is confessed, and that remedy accepted, the effort will always be to impugn the veracity of the faithful witness.

While one pities the deluded victims of that modern form of infidelity, the Higher Criticism, it is impossible not to feel a thrill of indignation against the men who are moved by Satan to voice the unbelief so pleasing to the minds of those who prefer the world that they can see, and which is temporal, to the heaven that they cannot see and which is eternal. "The carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom. viii. 7); this was clearly demonstrated at the cross in the rejection of Christ, the living Word—it is as clearly seen to-day in the rejection of the written Word. Under the plea of "reverent and honest doubt" the pulpits and the religious press of our times pour forth into the world torrents of bitter antagonism against the inspiration of Scripture. It is the sure forerunner of the apostasy so clearly foretold in the Scriptures of truth (2 Thess. ii.).

But in these early chapters of Daniel (iii.-vii.) we find not only accurate historic narrative, but moral instruction of the most important character. Satan's effort is, by raising all sorts of critical questions and doubts as to the history, to deprive the soul of the spiritual profit to be

derived from a prayerful meditation, in a believing spirit, 'on those pages of divine inspiration.

Nebuchadnezzar had set up his image. We need not stop to inquire from whence came the thought. He had just returned from Egypt where he had been victorious, and had no doubt seen the colossal statue of Rameses the Great, which is the wonder to this day of every traveller in that land. He would outdo even this in magnificence by making an image in his own land, not of stone but of *gold*.

But there was more than mere self-glorification in his act. How were all the "people, nations, and languages" that God had put under his dominion to be held together? What factor is the most potent in separating peoples, and even families? Is it not religion? What bloody wars has it not brought about? What massacres? If unity in religious worship could only be produced, then would there not be a power as effectual to unite, as diversity therein is mighty to divide?

Wherever coercion of conscience in religious matters has taken place, persecution has ever been the terrible weapon in the hands of the strong against the weak. The fiery furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, the Inquisition in Spain, the prison, the faggot, and the fire of our own land tell the same sad story.

But there were "certain Jews" in the province

of Babylon, men of faith and conscience, who, when the call to fall down and worship the golden idol went forth at the sound of cornet, flute, and all kinds of music, stood firm in their allegiance to the true God, the Jehovah of Israel. This was all the more remarkable an exhibition of steadfast faith and purpose, inasmuch as idolatry had always been the snare into which Israel had fallen even in their own land.

But they had enemies around them, unscrupulous men who shrank not from utilising the cruel weapon of persecution to avenge their own private wrongs. The Chaldeans had not forgotten that it was through these very men that they had lost their place and influence in the court, and that the king had been forced to confess that Daniel's God was a God of gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets. They knew how to work upon the vanity of Nebuchadnezzar.

"There are certain Jews whom thou hast set over the affairs of the province of Babylon . . . these men, O king, have not regarded thee: they serve not thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." This was enough. In his rage and fury the king commands to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego before him.

"Is it true?" he inquires of them. "Do not ye serve my gods?" &c. Then he gives them

but one alternative ; " If . . . ye fall down and worship the image which I have made, well : but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace ; and who is that God," he cries in impious defiance, " that shall deliver you out of my hands ? "

The calm dignity with which the three Hebrew children carry themselves in presence of this threat is truly magnificent. " O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter." They had served him well and faithfully when the claims of his service had not interfered with their allegiance to their God, but now it was a question of obeying God rather than men ; and in every dispensation the principle holds good that the claims of God are paramount, and that a faithful walk demands implicit obedience to His Word.

" Our God whom we serve," they say, " is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." Noble decision ! May their example prove invigorating to the faith of both writer and reader in this day of latitudinarian indifference and Laodicean lukewarmness ! " I have set the Lord always before me : because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved " (Ps. xvi. 8).

The Word of the Lord through Moses in this case was clear : " I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth : thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them," &c. (Exod. xx. 2-7). And if idolatry was inexcusable under the law, is it permissible under grace ? If wrong for the Jew, is it right for the professing Christian ? Little wonder is it that the Romish hierarchy have cut out of the prayer book which they place in the hands of the people, this second commandment, and have divided the tenth into two in order still to keep the number ten. Either this second commandment must go out of the book, or every image, statue, and crucifix must be swept from their chapels. Surely the steadfastness of these three Jews may put to shame much that goes on not only in Romish chapels, but in ritualistic churches.

Nebuchadnezzar's rage and fury now knew no bounds. He commands that they " should heat the furnace one seven times more than it was wont to be heated," and that his " most mighty men " should bind these three devoted witnesses for the true God and cast them into its midst. So urgent had been the king's commandment,

and so exceeding hot was the furnace, that these poor tools of Nebuchadnezzar's anger were devoured by the flames.

And what of the three faithful men who, in simple dependence upon God, were braving all the power of Satan? In this, the hour of their extremity, they proved the truth of words uttered a century before through the lips of Isaiah the prophet: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. . . . Fear not, for I am with thee" (Isa. xliii. 2-5).

The astonished king rose up in haste. "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" he asks of his counsellors. But now, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and"—more surprising still—"the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Whether or not any besides the king himself were given to see the fourth, we are not told, but God took care that all "the princes, governors and captains, and the king's counsellors" gathered together should see "these men, upon whose bodies the fire had no power." He vindicates His own majesty, and honours those who had honoured Him. "Blessed be the God

of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who hath sent His angel and delivered His servants that trusted in Him," &c. Even so shall it be in the case of some from amongst the same people, who in a day yet to come shall refuse to bow down to the image of the beast.

THE HUMBLER MONARCH.

(DAN. iv.)

THOUGH at first sight the chapters we are now considering (iii.-vii.) might seem to be purely historical, a little attention will show that they have a strikingly prophetic character.

The moral features exhibited by the great Gentile powers at their commencement abide more or less distinctly all through their course, and will be seen with even greater clearness at their close.

True worship is never a matter of compulsion, but of conscience. It is ever a mark of false religion for man to interpose between the conscience of his fellow and God; it matters not whether that religion be heathen, or professedly Christian idolatry.

It is important to bear in mind that the people of God who are in view in the Book of Daniel are Jews and not Christians.

In so saying, we assume that our readers are more or less familiar with dispensational truth. When Nebuchadnezzar set up his image it was a God-fearing Jewish remnant that refused to bow down and worship, or in any wise to own the idol that he had made. And at the close,

after the coming of the Lord for the Church (1 Thess. iv.), there will again be a faithful remnant from amongst the same people who will likewise maintain their allegiance to Jehovah in spite of the terrible persecution under Antichrist and the Beast (Rev. xiii.).

(Just as idolatry specially marked the first beginnings of the great Gentile powers, so Scripture has revealed that it will be at the end.

Though "the times of the Gentiles" are still running their course—they began with Nebuchadnezzar and will continue till the day of Jerusalem's deliverance (Luke xxi. 24)—yet during the present time they present an outwardly Christian character. So long as the Church is upon earth, the Holy Ghost who dwells in the Church is the power that hinders the development of all the evil that Scripture clearly foretells will close up the history of Christendom. The solemn testimony of the Word of God is this, that the Gentile powers, so far from learning the knowledge of the true God, and yielding submission to Him, will in the end burst forth in more determined rebellion.

It may be said that these powers no longer exist in an imperial form, that nothing remains but their broken fragments. While this is true, it is equally true that Scripture foretells the resuscitation of the last of the four empires. No doubt the man of the world does not expect any

such thing, but the simple believer in God's Word knows beforehand many a thing that the wisest politician entirely ignores. When the Roman Empire revives, as undoubtedly it will, the world will be completely taken aback. "They that dwell on the earth shall wonder . . . when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and shall be" (Rev. xvii. 8). This is the undoubtedly correct rendering of this passage.

It is just here that these historical chapters of Daniel have such a prophetic interest. The first act of man when placed in a position of absolute monarchy was to institute idolatry, and enforce it on pain of death. Revelation xiii. shows that so it will be at the close.

We have no doubt that the beast of Revelation xiii. 11 is the Antichrist of other parts of Scripture.* According to 2 Thessalonians ii. 4, he will set himself in the temple of God at Jerusalem and make himself to be worshipped, but not only this, he will set up an image to the Beast and cause men to worship it. He will possess miraculous and Satanic power, so much so that he gives power to this image to speak, and all who will not worship it he will cause to be killed.

Now at the time that these terrible things will take place the only people on earth who will

* See *The Man of Sin: who will he be?* By A. H. B.

recognise the true God will be the Jewish remnant. The Church will have been already "caught up," and the Spirit of God, though removed as He will be at the coming of the Lord, will have wrought repentance in the souls of that remnant. Rather than bow the knee to the false god they will face death itself. It will be the time of "the great tribulation." Without doubt the Book of Revelation as well as all the prophetic parts of Scripture will be of immense consolation to these suffering and persecuted saints. The church period will to them be a matter of history, and they will be awaiting the return of Christ, not in the air, but to Mount Zion. He will come not to take them out of the earth to heaven, as He will for us, but to bless them on the earth and to overwhelm all their adversaries.

At that time how sustaining to this tried remnant will be the history of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! It is so truly for all times, but especially so then, for their circumstances will be exactly identical. How appropriate, too, the words:—"If any man have an ear, let him hear. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints" (Rev. xiii. 9, 10).

Three great features marked the remnant in Daniel's time, and will no doubt at the close,

First, entire separation from everything condemned by the law (Dan. i.): second, understanding of the mind of God (chap. ii.): third, utter refusal of the false god (chap. iii.). In principle of course these things apply at all times, but in studying the Book of Daniel it is well to remember that we have specially to do with things and times that are Jewish.

Another great characteristic of the times of the Gentiles comes out in Daniel iv. Man always seeks to exalt himself. Since the Garden of Eden there has only been one exception in the person of Him who while very God was as truly man. This blessed One "humbled Himself." He took the lowly place of dependence and obedience. His meat and drink was to do the will of His Father, and this will He accomplished in perfect submission even at the cost of death, and that, too, the death of the cross.

But ever since the entrance of sin into this world, man left to himself has always turned away from God. "There is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. iii. 11). It is sadly true of us all that as sheep we have gone astray and turned every one to his own way. The greater the power man possesses, the more does he use it to exalt himself. It was so with Nebuchadnezzar, from the story of whose humiliation we might well learn the sin and folly of that which is so common to us all, namely, pride and haughtiness of heart.

All that Dean Farrar, copying the rationalistic school, can see in the history of Nebuchadnezzar's madness is a "worked up" story. Not Daniel but a "Palestinian Jew" concocted the story out of "some dim traditions" by "giving free play to his imagination after the common fashion of his age and nation." It is well that simple people should be aware what utter unbelief fills the minds of most of the religious leaders of Christendom. They have given up all real and honest belief in the inspiration of Scripture. Need any wonder if this strong ebb tide of infidelity should presently sweep back the rising generation into the dark ocean of apostasy and despair?

But judgment does not fall until ample warning is given. Twelve months before, a dream was sent from God that filled the king's mind with fear and trouble. Once again he calls to his assistance the soothsayers and magicians of his realm, but all in vain. The men of this world never will take heed to the plainest danger signals that God in His mercy places full in their pathway; they do not even understand them. But Daniel again stands before the monarch whose dream he had once before brought back to his memory and interpreted for him. Fearlessly he again delivers the message which God has sent him, and calls upon him to take heed to the solemn warning and thus escape the doom that awaited him.

But no ! At the end of twelve months the proud king was walking in his palace, and as he surveyed the magnificent city of gold, his bosom swelled with pride within him that *he* had built it all by the might of his own power, and for the honour of his own majesty. Where was God in all his thoughts ? “ While the word was in the king’s mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken ; The kingdom is departed from thee.”

SEVEN TIMES.

(DAN. iv.)

It has been before observed that there is more in these historical incidents in the Book of Daniel than mere history.

No one who has not had his faith shaken in the inspiration of the Scriptures, either through his own wilful unbelief or through the wicked insinuations of his fellows, need have any difficulty as to the miraculous incidents related in this book. To the gainsayer no other answer need be given than that with which the Lord Himself met the Sadducean rationalists of old which said that there was no resurrection of the dead — “Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God?” (Mark xii. 24). With God all things are possible.

It cannot be too clearly understood either by individuals or nations that true greatness can only be attained and maintained by giving God His rightful place. Nebuchadnezzar learnt to his cost that “those that walk in pride He is able to abase,” and this lesson must be learnt sooner or later by all. For seven years the proud monarch was driven from amongst men and dwelt amongst the beasts of the field till at length the tardy confession was wrung from him

that with God "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing ; and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth ; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou ? "

But in the interpretation of the dream we are doubtless meant to see more even than that which happened to Nebuchadnezzar himself. In stating the duration of the judgment that befell the king, purposely, it would seem, a symbolical measure of time is used, " Till seven times pass over him." Later on in the study of the book we shall find that "times" is a symbolical way of expressing "years," but in this chapter we have no doubt that both should be borne in mind ; the literal seven years of Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation and the symbolical seven times, or a complete cycle of time at the end of which the Gentile powers will learn the lesson of submission to the Most High God.

The title that is given to God by Daniel, and owned by Nebuchadnezzar in the previous chapter as well as here, is one of those indirect evidences of inspiration with which the whole Scripture abounds. Every student of the Word knows the importance to be attached to the names of God, and the connections in which they are found. One verse suffices to show the intention on God's part in the use of a particular name in a particular case, " I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by

the name of God Almighty, but by My name JEHOVAH was I not known to them" (Ex. vi. 3).

To the patriarchs God was known as the Almighty; to Israel, as Jehovah; to Christians, as Father; and to saints in millennial days He will be known as Most High. This is not the place for a full discussion of the subject, but it is impossible not to pity the poor rationalists who, blind to the moral and spiritual teaching of Scripture, waste their time and learning upon mechanical theories of separate documents.

Not only are the Scriptures inspired of God's Spirit, but the Spirit is needed to rightly understand them (1 Cor. ii. 9-16). No mere human learning will enable any one to know the mind of God as to any portion of His Word. A simple and unlettered man, born of God's Spirit, and indwelt by God's Spirit, will be able to enter into the truth of God as revealed in Scripture for edification and blessing, where the whole tribe of "higher critics" with their scissors, and paste-pots, and coloured inks remain in the darkness of the natural man that receives not the things of the Spirit of God.

When the interpretation of the dream stood out before Daniel's astonished mind, we are told that "his thoughts troubled him." In his dream God had given Nebuchadnezzar to see "a tree in the midst of the earth." In the first instance, no doubt it was true that Nebuchadnezzar himself was symbolised by the tree, "It is thou, O

king." But he, being the first of the Gentile powers, stands for the rest, and the tree in Scripture is constantly used as a picture of man in all his greatness (see Ezek. xxxi.). Nevertheless, "Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish" (Ps. xlix. 20); even so has it turned out, not for the Babylonian monarch alone, but for the whole political system of the world from that day to this.

Where evil is, government must be. It is an institution of God. "By Me kings reign, and princes decree justice" (Prov. viii. 15). When for their sins the Jews were given up of God, though for a time only, and the throne of the Lord was removed from Jerusalem, then the tree of Gentile government was planted in the midst of the earth. It grew and became strong. Its leaves were fair, its fruit abundant, and the beasts of the earth found shelter under its branches. Has it not been so with all the trade and commerce of the nations? and to whom do men as a rule trace all their prosperity and their riches? Is it not to themselves, to their own talents, and to their own wisdom? But "durable riches and righteousness" are with God, and His fruit is "better than gold, yea, than fine gold" (Prov. viii. 19). Let a man of the world read these lines, would he not sneer at the very thought? Is it not true that where riches and wealth are most quickly

acquired, God is least thought of? Let the gold-fields of Australia and California in the past reply. Need we point to Klondyke or Johannesburg in more recent times?

It may be answered that these are but avaricious men who have no fear of God before their eyes, but it is different with governments. Now the solemn truth that the whole book of Daniel teaches is this, that what characterises the whole political system of the world from the days of Nebuchadnezzar on to the time when the kingdom will be the Lord's, and He shall be governor amongst the nations, is the utter disregard of God, which is becoming more and more pronounced at this very time.

This will come before us more fully when we are considering chapter vii., but here we are symbolically taught the same sad lesson in the fact that Nebuchadnezzar's heart was "changed from man's," and a "beast's heart" was "given unto him."

The glory and dignity of man is to look up into heaven and walk in the fear of God; a beast on the other hand is without conscience, and has no moral relation with God. When first the Gentile empires were established they were of course pagan, and had no knowledge of the true God; even when at times forced to acknowledge Him, as was the case in more than one instance in the life of Nebuchadnezzar himself, how quickly was all forgotten!

It may be said that now they are Christian, and this makes a great difference. True, since the days of Constantine, paganism was put down and Christianity established by imperial authority, but it is not thus that people really become Christians. Nothing but personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ will make any one a Christian in anything else but in name. Nevertheless, while it is readily conceded that Christianity has made marvellous changes for the improvement of man's condition on the earth, yet, where is the nation that pretends even to shape its course or carry on its affairs according to the mind of God as revealed in His Word? The politician who in a debate would venture to make any reference to the Bible except by way of profane quotation would be at once put down as a canting hypocrite.

What Scripture shows is that, though individual rulers may have the fear of God before them, yet as a whole the Gentile powers are characterised all through their course by "the 'beast's heart' towards God, caring only for self, gratifying pride and lust of power."

But the "seven times" will come to an end, and at the close of "the times of the Gentiles" the Most High God will be acknowledged by all nations, kings, and rulers as the One "all whose works are truth, and His ways judgment." Then will Israel be blessed in their own land, and with Christ their once rejected king but

then acknowledged Jehovah in their midst, become the earthly centre from whence during the thousand years will flow joy and peace and blessing to every nation under heaven.

“Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with His people. . . . There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in Him shall the Gentiles trust” (Rom. xv. 10-13).

THE WRITING ON THE WALL.

(DAN. v.)

IT is not in keeping with the object we have in view in these papers on the Book of Daniel to enter at any length upon the attacks of rationalists against the authenticity of the book or the truthfulness of its record.

Hostility of heart to the great truth of the divine inspiration of Scripture is the main basis of their position, whilst conjecture and speculation are the great arguments with which they seek to overthrow faith. An overweening confidence in their own ability and professed honesty seems to blind their eyes to evidence which has satisfied the minds of men at least as learned and as capable of weighing evidence as they.

No one acquainted with the "Daniel controversy" will need to examine Dean Farrar's recent work in order to find new weapons of attack against the Word of God. In this respect there is nothing new in the book. It is easy to be a compiler, but more profitable to be a compiler of facts than of doubts. We would not notice the work were it not that it is one of the latest popular attacks upon the inspiration of this portion of the Bible. Most of the objections so triumphantly arrayed have long since been

thoroughly examined and satisfactorily answered. If obscurity still hangs round others, it would be wiser to wait for further light should God be pleased to vouchsafe it.

The Christian reader has learnt to trust implicitly those divine oracles which have spoken in power to his heart and conscience. He has no need to appeal to the testimony of Assyrian antiquities, nor Babylonian cylinders and clay tablets. Nevertheless these exist, and in the providence of God these long-buried witnesses are rising from their resting-places to condemn the rashness of the rationalist who dares to impugn the veracity of Biblical history — and none are better aware of their existence than the so-called “higher critics.”

It is difficult to imagine what standard of morality leads Dean Farrar to write in reference to the chapter of Daniel now open before us: “To those who, with the present writer, are convinced, by evidence from every quarter . . . that the Book of Daniel is the work of some holy and gifted *Chasíd* in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, it becomes clear that the story of Belshazzar, whatever dim fragments of Babylonian tradition it may enshrine,” &c.; and this from the pen of a man who has given his solemn adherence to Article VI., “In the name of Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.”

It matters not to the Dean that the lips of the Son of God have testified that Daniel himself was the writer; no, it was a holy and gifted Chasîd some 440 years after the time in which Daniel lived! If such were indeed the case he would need to be a man "gifted" with marvellous skill to be able to cheat the world with such an imposture for well-nigh two thousand years—an imposture which the "higher critics" have at length been enabled to unmask! But "holy"! Is this the adjective to apply to the perpetrator of such a fraud?

Enough, we trust, has been said to put our readers on their guard against such enemies of the Word of God, be their reputation what it may in the eyes of the religious world.

We have already seen that in chapters iii. and iv. God has been pleased to show us the moral traits that the Gentile powers possess more or less throughout their whole course from first to last. We now come to that character of evil which will infallibly bring down the judgment of God upon the last representative of that world-system which began with Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar had indeed acted in folly and wickedness, but he had been arrested in his course by the chastisement of the God of heaven. But Belshazzar's sin reaches such a pitch that there is no remedy. Nebuchadnezzar had persecuted God's people; Belshazzar sets himself in open antagonism to God Himself.

This profanity and impiety led to his own ruin and that of the Babylonian dynasty.

It was for her sins that Jehovah had suffered Judah to be "carried away captive out of his own land." "The Lord was as an enemy" to His people (Lam. ii. 5). He had "cast off His altar," and "abhorred His sanctuary," but was this a reason why, in the pride of his heart, Belshazzar should insult Him to His very face? There is a limit beyond which man's sin cannot go with impunity. It was so with Babylon of old, and it will be so in the case of the last representative of the Gentile powers in a day not far removed. This character of blasphemy will come before us when considering the solemn outline of the future contained in chapter vii.

"Belshazzar the king made a great feast." Noted for its grandeur and magnificence Babylon had always been, but on this occasion it had exceeded itself in its dazzling display of earthly glory. Surrounded by a thousand of his lords, he abandons himself to the unbridled gratification of the lusts and passions of his depraved heart. Profanity and impiety are stamped upon this closing scene of Babylon's greatness. God was not in all his thoughts, unless it were to mock and insult Him. The vessels of the Lord's house which was in Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar his father had carried to Babylon. Belshazzar "whiles he tasted the wine, commanded" that they should be brought forth, and in impious

defiance "the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, drank in them." Intoxicated with the "pleasures of sin," they drank wine, and "praised the gods of gold," &c. What a picture of the world without God! How like to much that takes place to-day in the heart of Christendom itself!

Long years before had the Lord foretold Babylon's doom. Well-nigh one hundred and fifty years previous to this very night Isaiah the prophet had been inspired to enter in descriptive detail into the circumstances of Babylon's fall, even mentioning by name, and that long before his birth, the one that should be raised up to carry into effect Jehovah's judgment upon her (Isa. xlv. 28, xlv. 1).

Later on, as the hour of her destruction drew near, "Seraiah, a quiet prince," was deputed to read all the words that had been written by Jeremiah the prophet against Babylon (Jer. l., li.). But all was in vain, and now the sin that had been unchecked by all these solemn warnings has reached its climax, and the writing on the wall stands out before the astonished and terrified gaze of the king and his associates.

Eyes that up till now had been blind were opening. Consciences that hitherto had slumbered now began to condemn. Hearts that but a moment ago were levity itself now were filled with troubled thoughts. What took place in Babylon of old will soon be re-enacted in more

guilty, because more privileged, Christendom. Indeed, much that is said of the literal Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar's and Belshazzar's days is repeated in the Apocalypse with reference to the spiritual Babylon that is now in rapid formation.

Space will not admit of any lengthened notice of the remainder of the chapter, the details of which are so well known, and have been so often dwelt upon. The terror of the king; the impotence of the wise men of Babylon, who "could not read the writing, nor make known to the king the interpretation thereof"—how true is this of all the wise men of Christendom, rationalists, higher critics, call them what you please. Then, the separation from the world, both in heart and life, of Daniel; the consequent spiritual intelligence, "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him"; his calm and dignified bearing before the king; his bold and fearless testimony—how instructive it all is, and how well it deserves our serious and prayerful study!

"In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain."

THE LIONS' DEN.

(DAN. vi.)

THE chapter that now lies open before us is the last in the series of historical chapters. But we have already seen that there is more than mere history in this first portion of the book (i.-vi.).

Rationalism assumes that the writer of the book, whoever he may have been, "is dealing, not with the real, but with the ideal." According to Dean Farrar, "The problem of the writer was to manage (!) his 'Haggada'* in such a way as to make private prayer an act of treason; and the difficulty is met—not, indeed, without violent improbability (!), for which, however, Jewish Haggadists cared little, but with as much skill as the circumstances permitted (!)." Nothing is certain here except that the Spirit of God had nothing to do with the inspiration of this portion of the Scriptures.

We turn away in pity and disgust from this deceitful handling of the Word of God, and yet not without the sorrowful conviction that all such tampering with the faith of others is hurrying on the apostasy of Christendom's last days, and bringing about that very state of things

* A sort of moral and religious novel with possibly some slight historical foundation.

outlined for us in these prophetic histories, and entered into in far greater detail in the after part of the book.

In chapter v. we have seen the downfall of Babylon, typical no doubt of that which bears the same name in Revelation xvii. The judgment of literal Babylon is described in Daniel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, of symbolic and spiritual Babylon in the Apocalypse. Earthly glory and idolatry are the distinguishing features of both systems. "It is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols" (Jer. l. 38), is said of "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency" (Isa. xiii. 19), and of that vast religious system now in rapid formation, soon to be manifested in terrible distinctness, of her it is said that she "was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls . . . and upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. xvii. 4, 5).

But in Daniel vi. the historic circumstances connected with Darius are made use of by the Spirit of God to set forth in type one other form of evil which will characterise the Gentile power at the close, and will bring down upon it the righteous judgment of God. It may, to some of our readers, seem far-fetched to speak of this portion of the book as being typical, and yet we

are persuaded that interesting as the history may be, there is more than mere history. Without doubt we need to exercise caution, and to keep imagination from leading us astray in thus explaining this or any other portion of God's Word ; and yet, who can question that much of Scripture most distinctly bears this character? Certain it is that prophecy has abundantly foretold that at the close a man will arise who will exalt himself, and put himself in the place of God. We are far from saying that Darius equalled in wickedness what the Antichrist will be. But what through foolish vanity the Persian monarch was ensnared into by others, the Antichrist will exercise all the power of Satan in forcing upon men by-and-by. He will set himself in the temple of God, and pretend that he is God. In our further progress through the book we shall learn much in reference to this terrible character who will play so prominent a part in the future history of the world.

But there are others as well, who, though possessing some features in common, should nevertheless not be confounded. The Beast of Revelation xiii. and xvii. is not the Antichrist, though resembling him in some respects, one of which is this very one, that he will become an object of self-exaltation and worship. "They worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the Beast, and they worshipped the Beast, saying, Who is like unto the Beast?" (Rev. xiii. 4)

We would not affirm that one of these two, Antichrist or the Beast, to the exclusion of the other, is typified in Daniel vi., but it is evident to us that that character of wickedness, man exalting himself and putting himself in the place of God, is purposely brought before us in the history, and from other parts of Scripture we learn that this it is which will meet with the judgment of God wherever found. Both the Beast and the False Prophet, who doubtless represent the future chief of the Roman Empire, and the Antichrist, will possess this feature in a special and awful degree, and their judgment will be none the less severe when, with all His saints, Christ shall appear in glory as "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS." They both shall be cast alive into the lake of fire (Rev. xix. 11 to end).

But it must not be forgotten that there will be saints upon the earth in those days. The Church will have been taken to heaven at the coming of the Lord into the air (1 Thess. iv.), the *heavenly* saints will have been caught up, but *earthly* saints, the Jewish remnant for instance, converted after the removal of the Church, will be upon the earth during the awful period of the Beast's activity. These are typified by Daniel himself in this chapter. They will cleave to their God in the face of terrible persecution. Some will be martyred (Rev. xiii. 15), others will be delivered. But the tribulation of those days will be so great

that "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved (or delivered), but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. xxiv. 22). What they will need in a special degree is the spirit of endurance, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matt. xxiv. 13). This verse does not refer to the salvation of the soul, but to the deliverance of the person from man's fiery persecution.

But Daniel's faithfulness in his day, typical of that of the Jewish remnant in the last days, may well inspire the saints of God in every dispensation to tread their earthly path with firmer step and more implicit obedience to God and His Word, regardless of all consequences.

How it was that Daniel came to occupy the exalted position under Darius in which he is found in the opening verses of our chapter we are not told. God, for the accomplishing of His own purposes, had brought him into favour with the king, and he thus became the object of envy and jealousy amongst the presidents and princes of the kingdom. Eagerly did they watch him, and seek occasions against him, but they found none. In all matters concerning the kingdom "he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him."

But not only was Daniel faithful to his earthly master, he yielded implicit obedience to his God. This his enemies knew right well, and here lay

their only chance of ridding themselves of one whose uprightness and integrity was a constant witness against themselves. "We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." Accordingly these wicked men plot and plan, and consult together, and actually succeed in persuading Darius to sign the blasphemous decree prohibiting all prayer except to the king himself on pain of being cast alive into the den of lions.

Here was a test to Daniel's faith and obedience. But without a moment's hesitation, "when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house . . . he kneeled down upon his knees . . . and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." A captive in an enemy's land, and far away from the city of Jehovah's choice, and the house that had been built for His name, yet in faith he avails himself of that provision of divine grace so marvellously recorded at the dedication of Solomon's temple amidst scenes of joy and glory (1 Kings viii.). The times had changed, the people had changed, but God remained the same. Oh! what lessons may the Church of God not learn, in this the day of her ruin and failure, from this deeply interesting episode in the life of Daniel the prophet!

For the moment Daniel's enemies seem to triumph. "Then these men assembled and found

Daniel praying and making supplication before his God." Did Daniel not know that the king's decree had been signed? Did he not know that the law of the Medes and Persians "altereth not"? Did he not know that the den of lions awaited him? Yes, he knew all this; but like his three companions of an earlier day (chap. iii.) he trusted in the living God, and like them is found enrolled in that noble company "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of the fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong" (Heb. xi. 33, 34).

With eager haste "these men," Daniel's cruel persecutors, come near before the king. "That Daniel," they say, "which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee." To a certain extent this accusation had a semblance of truth about it, for here was a case where God must come first, cost what it might. If Daniel was faithful in all that concerned the affairs of his earthly master, he was also, according to the king's own confession, the "servant of the living God," and he proved that that God was as able to deliver him from the lions as he had delivered Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the burning fiery furnace. The lions' mouths were shut, the faithful captive was delivered, but what of his oppressors? "The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they

made ; in the net which they hid is their own foot taken " (Ps. ix. 15).

Even so will it be when the Lord shall appear on Mount Zion for the deliverance of His oppressed and persecuted earthly people. Then shall He be "known by the judgment which He executeth"; then shall the wicked be "snared in the work of his own hands."

There are two ways in which the Lord may be known, *now* in grace, or *then* in judgment ; the first is salvation, the second will be perdition.

The "arm-chair" rationalist and "higher critic" may see in these inspired histories nothing but improbable fiction ; the devout believer finds therein instructive types of what from other parts of Scripture he knows will take place in a future, and possibly not far distant day. Without doubt, we may add that those faithful saints whose lot will be cast in those times will derive therefrom the very encouragement and comfort which they will then stand so much in need of. Of this we may be sure, that this, with every other part of "all scripture, is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. iii. 16).

DANIEL'S VISIONS.

(DAN. vii.)

THE most cursory reader of Daniel cannot fail to observe a striking change in the whole style of the book, starting with the chapter which now lies open before us.

In the first place we may observe that in the early portion of the book the order of the events narrated is strictly chronological. We have before remarked that chapter i. forms a sort of introduction to the whole book, giving a beautiful picture of the moral condition of the faithful Jews in the midst of the general declension of that day. Absolute and unswerving obedience to the Word of the Lord characterised them in every detail of their life.

The last verse of chapter i. informs us that "Daniel continued unto the first year of King Cyrus." This closes the first introductory portion of the book. In like manner the second or historical portion terminates with the words, "Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (vi. 28).

In chapter ii. the writer goes back upon the history to describe dreams and visions of an earlier monarch, and one even of an earlier dynasty than that of Cyrus. The chapters that

follow (ii.-vii.) present a terrible picture of the moral features that characterise the great empires of the earth during the whole period of "the times of the Gentiles," times which began with Nebuchadnezzar about the year 607 B.C., and which are still running their course. Coming now to chapter vii., we find that in a similar manner the chronological order is interrupted and the prophet retraces his steps to describe a vision which came to him in the night season during the reign of Belshazzar, King of Babylon.

Further, it is easy to see that the chapters we have hitherto been considering are what may be called *historical*; though, at the same time, these histories have a prophetic and typical signification. But in that portion of the book which follows, the visions and communications given to Daniel are as evidently *prophetic*, though to a large extent in symbolic language. The moral character, or, in other words, the attitude Godward, of the Gentile powers which began with the empire of Babylon, has been clearly and solemnly delineated; we are now to learn what will be their special relationship to the Jewish people, and that more particularly in days yet to come.

Hence it is that from chapter vii. the communications are addressed to the prophet himself and not to Nebuchadnezzar. We might have thought, Why should not Jehovah have sent Daniel direct to His people with a "Thus saith

the Lord?" Had not Jeremiah but a short while before received the command to "go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem" (Jer. ii. 1). Why, now, should the nation be apparently ignored, and the prophet alone be addressed? The sorrowful answer is evident. The time had come when God could no longer recognise the Jewish people as His people; to have continued to do so after the awful iniquity of Manasseh and other kings of Judah, to say nothing of Israel, would have been to support the people in their wickedness, and this in faithfulness to His own character He could no longer do. "If we believe not, He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. ii. 13), is a principle of ever-abiding application.

God is a God of government as well as grace, and if in His own sovereign grace He had chosen Israel to be His people and had brought them up from the land of Egypt, for this very reason, yes, because, "you only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities. Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos iii. 1-4). The time had now come when God could no longer walk with His people. For their sin, especially that of idolatry, He is obliged to deliver them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, though, blessed be His name! the faithful remnant may still walk with Him even though carried away captive to Babylon.

While writing thus, it is important to remember that we are not alluding to the matter of the soul's salvation. This rests upon the atoning sacrifice of the cross, and is eternally secured for every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a one once saved, is saved for ever. Christ gives to His sheep eternal life, they shall never perish, and none shall ever pluck them out of His, nor His Father's hand (John x.). They may be chastised here for their failures and sins, they may even, in extreme cases, be removed in God's discipline from this world (1 Cor. xi. 30), but, if so, with the very object that they should not be condemned by-and-bye (ver. 32).

But in Scripture we see another great truth, namely, the government of this world, and for this, Israel as a nation is the centre of all God's dealings with the earth. A well-known passage in the Old Testament (Deut. xxxii.), given at the commencement of their history, lays down in prophetic language, the principle on which God will act in judgment, and for final blessing towards all the nations of the world. "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam (Gen. x.), He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people" (Deut. xxxii. 8, 9).

Found in a desert land (Egypt), led through the wilderness, instructed and kept as the apple

of His eye, the Lord alone was the leader of His people, and no strange god was with Him. But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked, he forsook the God which made him, lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation, and provoked Him to jealousy with strange gods. This idolatry, begun at Mount Sinai with the golden calf, continued right through their wilderness journey, reached a climax in the land of Canaan under Manasseh, King of Judah (2 Kings xxiv. 3), so that Jchovah said, "I will hide My face from them . . . for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith" (Deut. xxxii. 20). In righteousness He might well have made the remembrance of them to cease from among men, but what then would the enemy have said? (vers. 26, 27).

But, after all, the enemies of Israel were the enemies of Jehovah (see ver. 41). He might use the nations, Assyria, Babylon, &c., as His rod of chastisement upon His people, but in the end these very nations would come up for judgment because of their own iniquity (see Jer. xxv. 12-34). "Their foot shall slide in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste" (Deut. xxxii. 35). And in that day will the apostate nation of Israel escape? No, "for the Lord shall judge His people"—but what of the godly remnant of those times? The Lord "will repent Himself for His servants" (ver. 36). But in the

end, *after judgment*, and terrible judgment, has done its work, there will be final blessing to all the Gentile nations in association with Israel His people. "Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people: for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful unto His land, and to His people" (ver. 43).

This chapter (Deut. xxxii.), with many others, speaks in a general way of the Gentile nations that are found at enmity against Israel. But from other parts of Scripture we learn that there are two great classes of these, carefully distinguished the one from the other, both as to the period in which they display their enmity, and the time and circumstances of their future judgment.

When the Jews were still recognised as God's people, when the temple was still standing, and when the kings of Judah were still occupying the throne of the Lord at Jerusalem, the great Assyrian empire was their chief enemy. Others there were of more or less importance, such as Syria and Egypt, but Assyria was the mightiest of them all. One remarkable thing that prophecy reveals is this, that in the future when Israel is once more back in their own land, and God once again recognises them as His people, this great enemy, the Assyrian, will likewise once more revive. One passage of Scripture at this stage will suffice in support of this, "Wherefore it shall

come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the King of Assyria," &c. (Isa. x. 12). Some of our readers may say, But the Assyrian is gone, he no longer exists. True, but has the Lord performed His whole work upon Mount Zion? Clearly not yet. Then the Assyrian is not yet done with. Ezekiel's prophecy (xxxviii., xxxix.) shows, in connection with other scriptures, that the Assyrian will be the last enemy dealt with before the setting up of final blessing during the millennium. Geographically he will occupy the territory now known as Turkey in Asia, and also the vast north-eastern empire now in rapid process of formation under Russia.*

In connection with this subject we may point out that a remarkable passage in Peter is strikingly illustrated—"No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Pet. i. 20). The meaning of this much misunderstood text is doubtless that the scope of no prophecy of the Scripture is to be had from its own isolated interpretation. Let us apply this to the subject now before us, the Assyrian. When Isaiah was giving forth his inspired testimony the Assyrian was in all his glory. He was sweeping through the land of

* See "Russia's Destiny."

Palestine, and was at the very doors of Jerusalem; "He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages; they are gone over the passage; they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled," &c. (Isa. x. 28-34).

But while the Spirit of God was leading Isaiah to speak of circumstances that lay immediately around, He nevertheless was looking through and beyond those circumstances to a time yet future, and inspired the prophet to use language which will only be literally fulfilled in a coming day. For in the past Assyria was destroyed before Babylon came into power, whereas in the future the Assyrian will be judged *after* the representative of Babylon has met his doom. This we learn from many parts of God's Word, but a striking and most interesting chapter gives us the order of events so far as Israel and its enemies are concerned.

In Isaiah xiv. are described the circumstances that attend the restoration of Israel to their own land, once more called "the land of the Lord" (ver. 2), and the order in which these take place. We cannot now do more than point them out, leaving to our readers the happy task of a close study of the passage. "The Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel." He will employ *the peoples* (not people) to "bring them to their place." Then will all the power

of Babylon* be destroyed (vers. 4-24). After that, "I will break the Assyrian *in my land*." Observe, Assyria judged after Babylon! It was not so in the past. Then Palestine, or Philistia, that is the nations surrounding Israel, melt away; and we know from Daniel xi. 41, and Ezekiel xxv., that certain nations are reserved to be dealt with by Israel *after* the judgment of the King of the North.

In result the triumphant answer will be that "the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of the people (Jehovah's people) shall trust in it."

* Here Babylon stands for the Beast of the Book of Revelation (*e.g.* chapters xiii. and xvii.). The Beast will be the fourth of those great world empires introduced by Babylon. Babylon the Great is another system of things altogether.

THE FOUR BEASTS.

(DAN. vii. 1-7.)

THE chapter to which we now desire to turn the reader's attention is one of the most interesting and important of the prophetic writings.

Except for the fact that Dean Farrar looks upon the whole Book of Daniel as a magnificent fraud, it would be hard to understand why he should pronounce the second portion to be "unquestionably inferior to the first part (chaps. i.-vi.) in grandeur and importance as a whole."

The Dean admits that "the vision is dated, 'In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon,'" but this, he hastens to tell us, is "merely a touch of literary verisimilitude." It is sad to think that men who fill the highest positions in the Established Church to-day are such utter unbelievers in the inspiration of the Scriptures. It is a sign of the times more serious than words can express that the infidelity of rationalism and the superstitions of ritualism are sweeping the multitude along towards the predicted apostasy of Christendom.

So far from lacking in importance, this vision of the prophet carries us right through the whole period of the times of the Gentiles. It extends over a vast stretch of time, commencing with the

rise of the Babylonian empire, about B.C. 600, and continuing until the coming of the Son of man, when there shall be given to Him "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him" (vers. 13, 14).

The chapter divides itself into four paragraphs, at verses 2, 7, 13, and 17. The first three are introduced by the words, "I saw in the night visions;" the last is "the interpretation of the things."

In the first of these paragraphs the general fact is stated that there were four beasts, and then a brief description is given of the first three; but brief as it is, details are given which were so remarkably fulfilled that nothing but inspiration could account for the miracle. Indeed, the very brevity of the description, coupled with the accuracy of accomplishment, leaves no room to doubt that Daniel "spoke as he was moved by the Holy Ghost."

God was pleased in vision to present to Daniel's thought the great sea lashed into fury and thrown into storm and unrest by the four winds of heaven. In this symbolic language we are given a picture of the nations of the earth in a state of chaos and confusion. Scripture not unfrequently uses this figure to describe this state of things. "Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a

rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!" (Isa. xvii. 12 ; compare also Isa. lvii. 20 ; Rev. xvii. 15).

Out of this restless condition of the nations, produced in the providence of God for the accomplishment of His designs upon the earth, four great beasts are seen to rise. "The four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea," and in truth stormy winds of whatever kind do but fulfil His will.

From this troubled mass, then, Daniel sees in vision the uprising of the Gentile empires. In this we are given their *providential* origin, whereas in verse 17 we are told what is their *moral* origin: they come from the earth and not from heaven.

There can be no reasonable doubt that these four beasts represent the four Gentile powers already portrayed in the great image of chapter ii. There, the course of empire is presented to the mind of Nebuchadnezzar as one whole, whereas here, Daniel perceives it in its successional form. There it stands before the monarch's gaze, in all its imposing grandeur as instituted by God, here it is seen utterly destitute of any moral link with God.

"Four great beasts"—wild beasts—"came up from the sea." A beast spends its existence entirely regardless of God ; this we have already seen has especially marked the whole course of Gentile rule since it was set up under Nebuchadnezzar. At the close it will assume an attitude

of open rebellion and blasphemous hostility to God and His people. It may be well to observe in passing that the beasts of Daniel vii. must not be confounded with the four beasts in Revelation. The words are different—in Daniel, they are *wild beasts*; in Revelation, *living creatures*.

“The first was like a lion.” Here we have the Babylonian empire. Nor is this the only place where Babylon is thus described. The prophet Jeremiah speaks of Nebuchadnezzar in these words, “Behold, he shall come up like a lion,” &c., adding the other symbol that Daniel saw in vision, “Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle” (Jer. xlix. 19, 22). But the strength of the lion and the swiftness of the eagle did not prevent the humiliation of the proud Babylonian empire: “I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked,” &c.

“And behold, another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side” (ver. 5). We need not appeal to history to prove that this could mean none other than the Medo-Persian empire, for the Book of Daniel itself leaves no room for doubt on this point. The dream was given to Daniel while Babylon still flourished under Belshazzar, but we have already been told in the historical portion of the book (v. 30, 31) that on the night when Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans was slain, “Darius the Median took the kingdom.”

The devout student of Scripture need not

have his faith in the inspiration of those Scriptures disturbed in the smallest degree by the wild assertions of the higher critics. Dean Farrar cannot believe that "Darius the Median" ever existed because no such person is mentioned in history. But the same doubt was thrown by the rationalists upon Sargon the king of Assyria (Isa. xx. 1) until quite recently, when his name was discovered upon one of the monuments. The more closely the Scriptures are examined, the more absolutely reliable they are found to be; the more they are exposed to the crucible of sound criticism, the more completely are they proved worthy of our implicit confidence and faith.

But the second empire, represented by the bear, is of a composite nature. It is not the Median alone, but the Medo-Persian. It is difficult to understand why Dean Farrar should refer us to Daniel v. 28, 31, vi. 8, 12, 15, viii. 20, in support of his contention that "those who explain the monster as an emblem, not of the Median but of the Medo - Persian empire, neglect the plain indications of the book itself, for the author regards the Median and Persian empires as distinct." One would naturally suppose that these references proved the very reverse; but then the theory of the rationalists requires that the fourth beast should be the Grecian empire and not the Roman, and for this it is necessary to split into two what the Word of God has most evidently given as one (viii. 20). Never-

theless though the empire was composed of two peoples joined in one, yet one of these was more prominent than the other. This the prophet sees in vision: "It raised up itself on one side." The same fact is told us in figurative language in the following chapter (ver. 3), for the ram of chapter viii. is the same as the bear of chapter vii., but there another trait is added, "The higher came up last." How admirably accurate are all these details every one in the smallest degree familiar with history knows right well, for the Medes were heard of earlier than the Persians, though the Persian element eventually gained the ascendant.

"After this I beheld, and lo another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads" (ver. 6). The Grecian empire under Alexander the Great is here indicated, noted for its swiftness in conquest—"four wings of a fowl." There is also added a feature, well known to history, which is more fully dwelt on later on in the book (chapters viii. and xi.), that is, the division of Alexander's kingdom, after his death, into four parts—"the beast had also four heads."

When we remember that the vision was given to Daniel in the reign of Belshazzar king of Babylon, that is, before the Medo-Persian and Grecian empires were in existence, and that in a few brief sentences details are given which were accurately fulfilled in the after-history of

those empires, it is impossible not to bow the head in worship before Him who for His own glory and the glory of His beloved Son was pleased to make known these things to His servant Daniel, and to inspire him by His Spirit to record them for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope (Rom. xv. 4).

THE FOURTH BEAST.

(Chap. vii. 7-13)

WE come now to the second division of our chapter. In the first the prophet had seen in a general manner four great beasts coming up from the sea, but three only of these were described, and that briefly, though with striking accuracy of detail.

Here, however, the fourth beast is exclusively noticed, and there can be but little doubt that the Roman empire is intended thereby. The Babylonian captivity had lasted seventy years, and this we may roughly take as the duration of the empire; for though Babylon was one of the most ancient cities of the earth—we find it mentioned in Scripture as early as the tenth chapter of Genesis—it had yielded to the power of the Assyrians. Babylonia had become an insignificant province, and the city of Babylon had been razed to the ground. Under Nebuchadnezzar, however, it was rebuilt after a gorgeous fashion about 607 B.C., and it is to this period of its existence that the vision of Daniel refers.

Roughly speaking, we may say that the Medo-Persian empire lasted a little more than two hundred years from the fall of Babylon under Darius the Mede, about 538 B.C., to the

time of the defeat of Darius the Persian by Alexander the Great at the battle of Issus in 333 B.C.

The Grecian empire, as we have seen, then asserted itself, and existed in greater or less degree for three hundred years. Towards the middle of this period another people began to make their presence felt in the affairs of the nations; these were the Romans. For many centuries this people had existed, for Rome was founded in 753 B.C., but in that form in which they came into prominence in connection with God's plans as to this earth we must look not at their earlier history as a republic, but at their later under the emperors. In other words, it is the Roman empire as such that is seen in vision by Daniel as this great and terrible beast.

Magnificence had characterised Babylon. Rapacity and greed were the prominent features of the Persian dynasty. Rapidity of conquest marked the Grecian, especially in its commencement under Alexander the Great. But the Roman empire was diverse from all the others. It was "strong exceedingly." Nothing could stand before it; it had "great iron teeth" with which it devoured all the peoples against whom its arms were directed. This remarkable power of the Roman empire to absorb the nations that came under its influence marks it off completely from all the beasts that had preceded it. Where it did not

absorb them, they were broken to pieces and stamped into submission.

But another remarkable feature stands prominently before the prophet's vision; "it had ten horns," and these ten horns, we are told, are "ten kings that shall arise" (ver. 24). There can be no serious question that this fourth beast of our chapter is the same that we find so frequently mentioned in the Apocalypse. In Revelation xiii. 1, John sees a beast rising out of the sea, that troubled state of human society, with "seven heads and ten horns"; these ten horns are here also explained as being "ten kings which have received no kingdom as yet" (xvii. 12).

The more closely we examine these chapters in Daniel and Revelation the more we are persuaded that this ten-horned state of the Beast looks on to that stage of its existence which is yet future. For the Roman empire is not done with, it is yet to arise, and will enter largely into the affairs of Palestine and Europe during that brief period of terrible trouble which follows the coming of the Lord for His saints, and immediately precedes His return with them in judgment.

We would direct the reader's attention to a well-known but most remarkable passage in this connection. "The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition" (Rev. xvii. 8).

Here, then, there are three stages clearly noticed and marked off from one another. It "was"; this takes us back to the early days of the empire when in all its dreadful and terrible strength it rose up into power amidst the nations of the earth. So wide-stretched was its dominion that a decree went forth from its first emperor, Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed (Luke ii. 1).

But it "is not"; that is to say, it has ceased to exist as a world power; instead of breaking others to pieces, it has itself been broken to pieces. Of course it must be distinctly borne in mind that we are not speaking of the Romish Church. The Roman empire is a political and not a religious power. The two are clearly distinguished in Revelation xvii.; in that chapter the Beast is the political, and the woman sitting on the Beast is the religious system.

But, further, we are told that it "shall ascend out of the bottomless pit"; this is the awful form that it will assume in the future. There will be at the close of this world's history, just before the setting up of the kingdom of the Son of man, a vast political system in Europe. Its seat of government will be Rome, the city of the seven hills (Rev. xvii. 9). Its form of government will be that commonly called *imperial*, that is to say, it will not be merely a king reigning over his own people, but an emperor who will have under him ten vassal

kings. "The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (ver. 12).

It seems clear from this that the ten-horned stage is yet future, for never in the history of the Roman empire has there been such a condition of things as is here described. There was a time when the Beast existed apart from the ten kings. If the present broken state of the empire be looked upon as the ten-horned condition, then where is the Beast separate from and holding sway over the ten? No, the condition of things described in Revelation xvii. has never yet been seen—namely, a great imperial head named The Beast, and *at the same time* ten kings who will give their power and strength unto the Beast.

The Word of God is specially concerned with what will take place at the close, and with those circumstances which lead up to the coming of the Son of man. Consequently the Spirit of God concentrates Daniel's thoughts upon a change of a remarkable nature that will take place amongst these ten kings at that time. "I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots" (Dan. vii. 8). Comparing this with Revelation xvii. 14, we gather, not that these three horns are positively destroyed, but that

their power is broken, for the whole ten are seen at the end in open war with the Lamb, and He it is that destroys them.

The little horn will become notorious, and alas for him! notoriously wicked (ver. 25). He will be a man possessed of unwonted intelligence—"in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man" (ver. 8)—coupled with arrogant pretension—"a mouth speaking great things;" and from the moment that he makes his appearance he thenceforth becomes so prominent in the affairs of the Beast that he and the Beast become identical. No one who reads Revelation xiii. 1-9 in connection with the description given of the little horn in Daniel vii. can fail to see the identity between the Beast who opens his mouth "in blasphemy against God," &c. (Rev. xiii. 6), and the little horn who speaks "great words against the Most High" (Dan. vii. 25).

All seems to prosper until God's time for the execution of judgment has fully come—"I beheld till the thrones were set up" (ver. 9). The authorized version is here misleading. The thrones here spoken of are not the earthly thrones of human government, but the heavenly thrones of divine judgment. Little as man may believe it to-day, an end will come to all the blasphemous hostility to God, His Word, His truth, and His people, which is gaining strength every day, and which will burst forth with appalling fierceness the moment the restraining

power of the Holy Ghost is taken away by the removal of the true Church at the coming of the Lord (2 Thess. ii.).

Judgment it is, and not the conversion of the world through the gospel, which will end the history of the times of the Gentiles. "I beheld till the thrones were set up, and the Ancient of days did sit," &c. Who is this Ancient of days? The description here given resembles so closely what is said of the Son of man in Revelation i. that it would be impossible not to identify the two. Indeed, our chapter does so further down, for in verse 13 we are told that "one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days," whereas verse 21 informs us that it is the Ancient of days that came. It is the Lord Jesus Christ to whom, as Son of man, all judgment has been committed (John v. 27), and who, while truly man, is as truly God. In His blessed Person we see One who, according to the prophecy of Micah (chap. v. 2), came forth out of Judah, and therefore was man, and yet, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, and hence was God.

"THE KINGDOM OF THE SON OF MAN."

(DAN. vii. 13, 14.)

IN the second and third visions of our chapter (vers. 7-15) we have clearly laid down *what* will be the end of "the times of the Gentiles," *why* that end will be brought about, and *how* it will be effected.

The solemn future of this world is this, that God will interpose in judgment. The Ancient of days will sit, a fiery stream will go forth from before Him, myriads of the heavenly host shall stand before Him, the judgment will be set, and the books be opened. This is not the judgment of the great white throne (Rev. xx.) where the wicked dead are alone in question, a judgment which will take place at the close of the millenium; here we are informed of a terrible judgment which will overtake living people on the earth, not after but before the Son of man shall have taken His kingdom. Christ is the appointed judge of both quick (the living) and dead, but these judgments will not take place at the same time.

While it is a truth that no one who is subject to the Word of God can for a moment question that God will judge the world in righteousness, nevertheless it is a very solemn consideration what will be the immediate cause of this judg-

ment. "I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame."

From the time of the fall of man in the garden of Eden sin has been in the world. Moral iniquity of the darkest character has abounded ever since, and crimes of the most awful description have been perpetrated. All this will come out in the light of God's presence at the great white throne, and shall receive its righteous award when the dead shall be judged according to their works.

But here (Dan. vii. 11, 25) the cause of judgment is different. The power that God originally put into the hands of the Gentiles will in the end be directed against Himself. It matters not that these Gentile nations have become outwardly Christian; none but the blindest will deny that with the large majority it is but an outward profession, and that even this profession is rapidly being given up. An event which the world little suspects may be near, but which rapidly increasing numbers of true Christians are waking up to believe is close at hand, will reveal in a startling manner the difference between real faith and mere lip profession. The Lord is coming, and in the twinkling of an eye will take His own away, then it is that the true character of the beast will manifest itself. Those that are left behind in these so-called

Christian lands will be given over to apostasy and to believe a lie. It is terrible to contemplate that large numbers of the pulpits of Christendom to-day are saturating the population with the infidelity which to-morrow may produce these awful results so plainly described in Daniel and Revelation as well as elsewhere.

Few who read these pages will have any difficulty in identifying the fourth beast of Daniel vii. with *the* beast of Revelation xiii. and xvii. At the time that Daniel wrote all four beasts were yet to arise, consequently they are numerically distinguished according to the order in which they took their place amidst the nations as world powers. In this succession the Roman empire was the fourth. But when John wrote the three first had ceased to exist as powers, the fourth alone remained, and hence in the Apocalypse it is spoken of as *the* beast. But in the last phase of this empire it will possess an imperial head controlling the ten kingdoms which go to form the whole beast, called in our chapter "the little horn." Sometimes the expression "the beast" is used for the empire as such, sometimes for its head, and it is of importance to see which is meant in each case. For some might find a difficulty in the fact that in Revelation xix. 20 the beast is said to be taken and cast *alive* into the lake of fire, whereas here (Dan. vii. 11) it is said that he was *slain*. There is no contradiction, for in Revelation it is the

chief or head that is in question, whereas here the empire as such meets its judgment, and is destroyed because of the great words which the horn spake in blasphemy against God.

“As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time” (ver. 12). Only one empire was to be in power at a given moment. When the Medo-Persian arose the Babylonian declined; and when the Grecian became prominent the Medo-Persian gave way. In like manner the Grecian fell before the power of Rome. But though these empires lost their dominion in succession, the nations and peoples of which they were made up continued. To this day the Persians exist as a nation, and likewise the Greeks, though their dominion as empires has been taken away. In our further study of the book we shall see that a representative of the Grecian empire is to play a very important part in the future in connection with the Jews.

We have seen that the end of all this world's pride and politics will be a pouring forth of God's righteous and fiery judgment because of the arrogant and blasphemous rebellion against Him of the little horn. How will it be brought about?

“I saw in the night vision, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they

brought him near before him" (ver. 13). Here we have vividly described the coming of the Lord, not as the Bridegroom for His bride, but as the Son of man in judgment. It may be well to say in passing that wherever the coming of *the Son of man* is spoken of it is always His coming in judgment. One passage that might seem to go against this is Matthew xxv. 13, but in that verse it is acknowledged that the words—"wherein the Son of man cometh"—are an interpolation, and should be left out. "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour." The Lord will first come and translate His people from earth to heaven to meet Him in the air, then will follow a brief interval of apostasy and rapidly increasing evil, and all will then suddenly be cut short by the coming of the Son of man with the clouds of heaven.

When He comes for His own the dead in Christ and the living saints are caught up together *in the clouds* to meet the Lord *in the air*, but here the Son of man comes *with the clouds of heaven*, and He comes *to the earth*. To this our blessed Lord referred when adjured by the High Priest to declare whether He were the Christ, the Son of God, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64). Moment of awful import to this poor world! The crown of thorns will then be replaced by the diadem of glory, and the reed which man in

mockery placed in His hands shall be changed for the sceptre of righteousness.

It was this, too, that John in Patmos beheld in vision when he announced, "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so. Amen" (Rev. i. 7). In Daniel the Son of man "came to the Ancient of days," for Christ is there seen as man, whereas in the Apocalypse the Son of man is seen by the prophet possessed of all the attributes that belonged to the Ancient of days (*cf.* Dan. vii. 9, and Rev. i. 14), for in truth in the Person of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ are combined in absolute perfection both the human and divine natures, and these in Him though distinct are inseparable. Infinite and holy mystery which defies the finite creature's grasp to comprehend. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father" (Matt. xi. 27).

After judgment has done its work, then, and not till then, will be set up the glorious kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. A king shall then reign in righteousness. The iron heel of the oppressor shall be lifted from the earth. Mercy and truth shall meet together. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9).

"His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom

that which shall not be destroyed" (ver. 14). No other earthly kingdom will follow that of the Son of man; this is the force of the word "everlasting" in this passage. So long as earthly kingdoms last, His will endure and never be destroyed. We know from other parts of Scripture that at the close of the millennium the mediatorial kingdom of the Son of man will be "delivered up." The verse we are here considering does not allude to the eternal state, for the prophets of the Old Testament confine themselves to descriptions, and blessed descriptions too, of the earthly reign of the Lord Jesus Christ as Son of man, and this we are told will last for one thousand years, hence called *the millennium* (Rev. xx.). When that is over and the last enemy, death, is destroyed at the judgment of the great white throne, then will the Son deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and God in the plenitude of His being shall be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 24-29). A blessed description of the eternal state is given to us in the Apocalypse (xxi. 1-8).

"THE INTERPRETATION OF THE THINGS."

(DAN. vii. 15—end.)

THE fourth and closing division of our chapter contains the interpretation of the three preceding visions. But, as always in Scripture, the explanation adds details, and enlarges upon what has gone before ; for Scripture never merely repeats itself.

Thus in verse 17, the four great beasts are explained to be four kings, and these are said to "arise out of the *earth*." This in no wise contradicts what is said in verse 3, where we are told that they "came up from the *sea*." It was out of a state of restless confusion of nations that these four beasts arose ; this seems to be meant by the figure of the sea. Great empires, such as Egypt and Assyria, had existed before these four of which the prophet writes, but they had been broken up and disorganised, and out of the chaos that ensued these four kingdoms of Daniel's vision are seen to arise. It is interesting to note from history that though they did not all spring into power at once, they nevertheless all had their origin at pretty much the same period, though the Eastern powers developed much more rapidly than the Western.

But not only did they providentially arise out of a state of chaos, *morally* they are seen to

have an earthly origin. They arise out of the *earth*; this no doubt is in contrast to the kingdom of the Son of man who will come with the clouds of *heaven*.

In verse 18, another feature of great importance is added, viz., "the *saints* of the Most High shall take the kingdom." We are not to suppose that this is a mere repetition of what had gone before. Some have imagined that this is a figurative way of describing the reign of Christ. But no, when the time comes for Christ to take His great power and reign, the saints of the Most High will reign with Him.

It may be asked, Who are the saints of the Most High? Other parts of Scripture will help us to a right reply. No doubt the expression is similar to that with which we are familiar in the epistle to the Ephesians, and indeed the marginal rendering appears to be the more correct, not "saints of the Most High," but "saints of the high (or heavenly) places." It would seem to mean the heavenly saints in contrast to the earthly, for at the time at which Daniel's vision will be fulfilled, God will have saints upon the earth, as well as saints in the heavenly places. These earthly saints are alluded to further down in our chapter as "*the people of the saints of the high places*" (ver. 27).

We are not to expect to find the Church alluded to in any direct or special manner in Daniel, but nevertheless we have no doubt that

the saints of this present period are included in the expression. It seems to us that the Old Testament saints, the saints from Pentecost to the rapture, that is the Church, and the saints martyred between the rapture and the appearing of Christ, will all be included amongst "the saints of the high places" who will "take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever" (ver. 18).

But while this is so, the Church alone possesses the intelligence of her heavenly position during her sojourn on earth. How great should be the influence of this upon our walk and ways! Greater privileges and nearer relationships to Christ belong to the Church than those spoken of here, but this would lead us too far from our subject. It is well, however, to remember that the greater does not obliterate the less, and the apostle uses the very truth brought before us in Daniel, to bear upon the Corinthians in a practical manner (1 Cor. vi. 1-9).

There are many details of exceeding interest in the remaining part of the chapter, but one object seems to occupy a very prominent part in the mind of the Spirit of God; it is the "little horn." He will be a character of exceptional wickedness, and is to fill a very important part in the future of European politics, and is likewise to come into very close contact with the Jewish people in the end. He will possess in-

telligence to a remarkable extent—"in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man" (vers. 8, 20), but all will be directed to his own aggrandisement—"a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows." Owing to these qualities, some have been led to think that the little horn is the same as the antichrist, or the man of sin of 2 Thess. ii.

Later on we shall see that this is not the case. There will be a personal antichrist alive at the same time, but the sphere of antichrist's activities will be Jerusalem, whereas the "little horn" will flourish in Western Europe.

We do not mean by this to imply that this chief of the Roman Empire will have no connection with Palestine, and the antichrist who will be reigning there. In verse 21 we are told that "the same horn made war with the saints." Some might ask, Who are these? Have not the saints already been caught up when the Lord comes into the air? How then are there any more saints upon the earth? The answer is that these saints are Jewish saints converted after the rapture. Revelation vii. is clear as to this point, that many from amongst the tribes of Israel, as well as a vast multitude from amongst the heathen, will be converted after the Church has been taken away. It is a fatal delusion to imagine that any from amongst Christ-rejecting Christendom are included in these two companies. Christendom's opportunity is *now*; at

that time the door will be shut, so far as all those are concerned who have the opportunity to-day, but despise it. . No one giving a serious consideration to 2 Thessalonians ii. can have any doubt of this.

That these are Jewish saints seems clear from verse 25. The little horn will blaspheme God. There can be little doubt that the same evil personage is described in Revelation xiii. 5-8. But not only does he speak great words of blasphemy against God, he will blaspheme "them that dwell in heaven," who would no doubt be the same as "the saints of the high places" (ver. 25). These would be in heaven, and are not the same, it appears to us, as the saints against whom he prevails (ver. 21), who are evidently on earth; "it was given to him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them" (Rev. xiii. 7). These last are doubtless Jewish saints, the persecuted remnant of Israel when back in their own land.

What confirms us in this thought is the fact that the "times and laws" are given into his hand. These are evidently the Jewish feasts and solemn days which will once again be observed according to the law; they and not the saints will be delivered into his hand, but not for ever—"until a time and times and the dividing of time." Later on in our study of the book we shall learn more about this defined period; at present it may be sufficient to say

that it coincides with the forty-two months of Revelation xiii. 5. It will be the period of "the great tribulation" which is to last for three and a half years. At its close "the judgment will sit," and the dominion of this exceedingly wicked power will be taken away. This will take place by and at the coming of the Ancient of Days. The Son of man will appear with power and glory, and the fiery judgment of God will be poured forth upon this representative of all the pride and blasphemy of man. Other parts of Scripture enter more fully into this, and these will come before us in due course.

But how sublime is the picture here given. On the one hand, man on earth in all the littleness of his own self-importance in tumultuous activity setting himself against God, against His saints, against heaven; on the other, God in heaven in all the dignity and tranquillity of His majesty and power, unseen by mortal eyes, yet seeing everything. At length the last blasphemy rolls from man's lips, the last deed of daring defiance rises up before the eye of God. Then all is changed. Heaven is astir. The wheels, wheels of burning fire, of that throne on which sits the Ancient of Days begin to move. Then the coming of one "like a Son of man," and yet much more than man, and to Him it is given to execute judgment, long delayed, yet justly earned.

How solemn it is to see everything rapidly

converging to this in the world around us. The times are moving quickly. "Heaven and earth shall pass away ; but My words shall not pass away" (Luke xxi. 33). But how bright the prospect for this world after judgment has done its work, and all things that offend, and them that do iniquity have been gathered out of the kingdom of the Son of man (Matt. xiii. 41) ; then "the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (ver. 27).

THE RAM AND THE HE-GOAT.

(DAN. viii.)

GOD is pleased to cause a second vision to pass before Daniel. It is still the period of the first beast's power. The Babylonian empire, though nearing its end, is still in existence. But the prophet is carried in vision to the capital of the kingdom that was to follow upon its downfall.

It is of importance to observe that a remarkable change comes at this part of the book. From the first verse of this chapter to the end of the book the language is Hebrew, whereas from chapter ii. 4 to vii. 28 it is Chaldee. The reason of this is that in the first part of the book we have especially what has reference to the course of the great Gentile powers, their rise and fall, their succession, and their moral characteristics, hence the language used was that in common use in the Babylonian capital. But in the chapters that follow, God is pleased to describe what has specially to do with His own people—the Jews—consequently Hebrew is the language employed. True, we likewise find much about the third and fourth beasts, or at least their representatives in the last days, but this only because of their close connection with the history of the Jewish nation.

It is well to remember that whilst stupendous changes may be taking place amongst the nations of the earth, empires may rise and empires may crumble into dust, God has one object of interest on the earth, and that is the people that He brought out of Egypt. So far as the earth and God's dealings with the earth are concerned, that only is of importance which has to do with them. They are beloved for the fathers' sakes, and of them as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. (Rom. ix. 1-6.)

The attempt of the rationalists to prove that Daniel lived under the third or Grecian empire breaks down at every turn; it is evidence to all but themselves of that hostility to God and His word that fills the natural mind which is enmity against God. The Spirit of God is here giving us through Daniel a marvellous outline of what was all future at the time that it was written, and much of which, as we shall see, remains to be accomplished.

"I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and, behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns," &c. (ver. 3). We do not need history to explain, for in verse 20 we are told that "the ram which thou sawest having two horns are the kings of Media and Persia."

The ram of chapter viii. is the same as the bear of chapter vii. If we remember that the empire had not yet arisen, we cannot but be

struck with the remarkable accuracy of the details given. Need we wonder? God is the author of the book, Daniel is but the instrument. The ram had two horns; here we are shown the composite nature of the Persian empire. Two peoples went to form it—the Medes and the Persians. But of these two horns one was higher than the other, and this fact is well known to history, for the Persian element preponderated; and yet, strange to say, it was the later in asserting itself: “the higher came up last.”

In all this we see the absolute accuracy of the Scripture. It would have been impossible, apart from divine inspiration, to have given in two or three lines such a perfect forecast of the future. No wonder that the deniers of revelation exert their utmost powers to disprove the early date of Daniel. Porphyry, the heathen writer of the second century, did the same; how sad and awful a spectacle to see the twentieth-century theologians and doctors of divinity in such company. But apostate christendom is more guilty than dark heathendom, and its damnation slumbereth not.

The ram pushes “westward, and northward and southward” (ver. 4). It is an Eastern power—Eastern so far as Palestine is concerned—that is here represented, and in this language we are shown the direction of its conquests.

But now the prophet’s gaze is directed to the west: “an he-goat came from the west on the

face of the whole earth" (ver. 5). The chapter further on explains this to be "the king of Grecia" (ver. 21). It is the same as the leopard of the previous chapter. He is seen to come on the face of the whole earth, and with such impetuous rapidity that he "touched not the ground." Unlike the ram, which pushed west, north, and south, aggrandizing itself slowly, if surely, according to its own will, the he-goat has one point of furious attack, "he came to the ram . . . and ran unto him in the fury of his power." But this is not sufficient to describe his bitter antagonism, he "came close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him." The fact was that Greece had an old and very real ground of antagonism to the Persian empire. The vast armies of Persia had invaded Greece in the days when this latter was but a small and insignificant people, but now God's time had come for the passing away of the second empire and the uprising of the third. "There was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand."

But further details are given that place beyond all doubt the true interpretation of the vision; "the goat had a notable horn between his eyes" (ver. 5), and this great horn, we are told, is "the first king" (ver. 21). It was Alexander the Great, the mighty conqueror so well known to history. Only here let us remember, the Spirit of God was giving prophetically what was not

accomplished historically till nearly three hundred years after. Through Alexander's extraordinary energy the power of Greece made itself felt far and wide in a remarkably short space of time, "the he-goat waxed very great" (ver. 8). But at the very zenith of his fame and power he was suddenly stricken down, "when he was strong the great horn was broken." He died when he was still but a young man, only about thirty-three years of age, and in the midst of his victories.

Then after a short time the empire that Alexander had built up was divided into four parts, over which four of his generals became rulers. No language could more accurately describe what really took place. When the great horn was broken, that is, after Alexander's death, there "came up four notable ones towards the four winds of heaven" (ver. 8). Though powerful, yet they were not so strong as he, "four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power" (ver. 22).

Nobody in the smallest degree familiar with the history of those times can fail to be struck with the marvellous accuracy of the description here given so briefly. Had Daniel been writing history instead of prophecy it would have been absolutely impossible to have given a more correct account of what actually took place. So clear is this that a mere schoolboy can discern the perfect accord between the facts of

history and the words of Daniel. If, as the higher critics assert, Daniel lived in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes in the second century before Christ, that is to say, *after* the events had taken place, how is it that what he wrote was not understood? The last verse of our chapter tells us that Daniel was "astonished at the vision, but none understood it." This alone is sufficient to shatter the rationalists' pet theory of the late date of Daniel.

But Scripture does not merely relate history, even prophetically. Nothing is inserted without definite purpose, and here, as we have seen, the object before the Spirit's mind is to record what concerns the Jewish nation, and that especially in the last stages of its history. Consequently two of the divisions of Alexander's empire are passed over in silence. Two only out of the four came into close contact with the Jewish nation, and though all appearance of their dominion has long since passed away, yet they are destined to revive, and representatives of these will play a most important part in the future history of God's earthly people. They are spoken of in chapter xi. as "the king of the north" and "the king of the south." The first of these, the king of the north, is typified by "the little horn" of chapter viii.

We must not suppose that the little horn of chapter vii. is the same as the little horn of chapter viii. They are two distinct personages,

each of which will influence in a marvellous way the affairs of the world, and of the Jews in the future, possibly at no very distant date. Some have thought that the little horn of chapter vii. was the Papacy, and that of chapter viii. Islamism, the great scourges of Christendom in the West and the East respectively. But it is of importance to remember that Daniel is treating not of Christians and the Church, but of the times when God will once more be directly dealing with His earthly people, Israel. If this were better understood many sincere and well-meaning Christians would be saved from their lamentable and futile attempts at fixing the date of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. What have the 1260 days, call them years or what you please, to do with anything taking place during this unreckoned period? In saying this we do not for one moment question that they are literal days. But these days will not commence to be counted until the removal of the Church, and the resumption of God's dealings with His earthly people.

“A KING OF FIERCE COUNTENANCE.”

(DAN. viii.)

WE have already pointed out that the little Horn of this chapter is a totally different personage from the little horn of chapter vii. Here we have to do with the Grecian empire, and not the Roman, as in chapter vii.

After the death of Alexander the Great, the Grecian empire was divided into four parts, as we have seen, and “out of one of them came forth a little horn” (ver. 9). This little horn waxes exceeding great, and exerts its influence “toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land.” In other words, it is the “king of the north” of chapter xi., and geographically occupies the position of Turkey in Asia. In the mind of God its importance is due to its connection with that land which is “the glory of all lands”; the land which Jehovah had espied for Israel whom He had chosen, and to whom He had made Himself known in the land of Egypt as their Redeemer and Deliverer (Ezek. xx.). Palestine, in spite of all its desolations, was still to the prophet Daniel “the pleasant land.”

The little horn waxed great, even to “the host of heaven,” a term which doubtless applies to

those in authority amongst the Jews. We cannot too frequently remind our readers that the circumstances to which these prophecies relate are Jewish and not Christian. Hence we must not expect to find here an allusion to Mohammedanism any more than to the Papacy in chapter vii.

We believe that there has already been a partial fulfilment of this prophecy. Antiochus Epiphanes, the notoriously wicked king of the Seleucidæ, is no doubt referred to as the little horn, yet he was but a type of another, a king of fierce countenance, who is still to come. In the study of the Old Testament prophets, it is of importance to bear in mind that the Spirit of God always has in view the glory of Christ and those events which are to take place at the end. Indeed, we are told in this very chapter, when Daniel seeks for the meaning of the vision, that "at the time of the end shall be the vision"; and Gabriel explains to him what shall be "in the last end of the indignation" (ver. 19).

"The indignation" was a period in the history of Israel with which the mind of the prophet was familiar. Such a passage as Isaiah x. 5-25 would no doubt rise to his thoughts as the angel speaks to him of "the last end of the indignation." Was not this indignation the period of Jehovah's anger against His people? Who was the instrument in His hand to execute it? Was it not this very king of the north? For the

Assyrian and the king of the north are the same individual.

It is clear that this remarkable passage in Isaiah goes very much further in its application than to the circumstances existing at the time the prophecy was given; for the Assyrian of Isaiah's day has long since passed away, and yet most certainly the Lord has not yet performed His whole work upon Mount Zion and in Jerusalem (ver. 12). But what are we told in this passage? Is it not that when that whole work has been performed, and not till then, the Assyrian will be punished? What is more clear than this, that some one is yet to arise in connection with Israel in the last days, of whom the Assyrian of the past was a type?

The worst part of the indignation against Israel is yet to come. The time of this great tribulation is yet before them. It will last for three years and a half, or 1,260 days, but "the indignation shall cease." And how will it cease? By the destruction of this very Assyrian, whom Jehovah will use for the chastisement of His people (ver. 25).

The little horn, then, has no doubt had a partial fulfilment historically in the notoriously wicked Antiochus Epiphanes, while at the same time it is evident that the explanation of the prophecy carries us on to the time of the end. But in verse 11 and the first half of verse 12 we find a parenthesis which refers, we believe, to that

period which is yet to come. It will be observed that there is a remarkable change of the pronoun from "it" to "he." The "it" of verse 10, and of the latter part of verse 12, refers to the little horn, and has been fulfilled in the history of Antiochus Epiphanes. He had a special antipathy to the Jewish people, and set himself against those in prominence amongst them. In this he succeeded, as history informs us, and as the prophecy was beforehand in announcing; "it cast down some of the host and of the stars," &c. (ver. 10).

But in verse 11 we read of one who will magnify himself "even to the prince of the host," the Lord Himself. It is no mere accident that the pronoun is changed from "it" to "he," the Spirit of God would thereby draw our attention to the parenthesis, containing details of immense importance, which none understood (ver. 27) at the time the prophecy was given, but which doubtless the remnant will understand in a coming day.

At the close this one typified by Antiochus Epiphanes will set himself not merely against the leaders of the Jewish nation, for they will at that time be back in their own land, and once more recognised as the people of God, but he will "stand up against the Prince of princes." This clearly means the Lord Himself, the Messiah of Israel. This is the one referred to in verse 11 as "the prince of the host." Here it is important to

observe that the marginal reading is the correct one. Not "by" him, but "from Him the daily sacrifice was taken away." In other words, the "him" of this clause refers to Christ and not to the king of the north of the future. While it is true that during the period of the great tribulation the restored sacrifices shall be made to cease, nevertheless this will be brought about by the leader of the Roman empire, the little horn of chapter vii., and not by the king of the north, or little horn of chapter viii. This will come before us while studying the next chapter. We merely allude to it in passing as another instance of the absolute accuracy of Scripture.

No doubt even verse 11 has had a measure of fulfilment, for Antiochus Epiphanes entered the sanctuary and offered a sow on the altar in profane mockery, and while by no means dogmatising on the point, we are inclined to think that the 2,300 days of verse 14 refers to this past profanation of the temple rather than to the future. At any rate, it is well to remember that whether past or future it has exclusively to do with Jewish times. To see this will save us from the attempt to fit it in with any dates during the period of Christendom's history.

There can be no doubt that the close of the chapter looks on to what is yet future. However improbable it may appear to those unacquainted with Scripture, that a mighty king

shall yet stand up in the region once ruled over by Antiochus, this portion of the prophetic Word, along with many others that we may glance at later on, leaves no room for doubt on the point. Who this king will be, whether it will be the Sultan who now rules, or misrules, that territory, we do not attempt to predict. But it is clear that in "the latter time" when the transgressors are come to the full—for things are going from bad to worse there as everywhere else—a king of fierce countenance shall stand up. His policy will not only be one of war and conquest by the force of arms, though this he will do and that most effectually, but he will likewise "cause craft to prosper"; he will be a man of intellectual ability, "understanding dark sentences," and all this power both mental and material will be directed towards the furtherance of his hostile designs against "the mighty and holy people," that is, the Jews.

It may seem strange that God should speak in such terms of that nation, but we must remember that "they are beloved for the fathers' sakes," and that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. xi.). God will never go back from His promises, whether these be in connection with earthly blessings or heavenly; and though they may seem to us all unworthy of such a title, nevertheless it is theirs on the ground of responsibility no less than of privilege.

A striking detail is added in verse 24. Mighty as this king will be, he will have one behind him of greater power still—"his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power." We know which of the so-called Great Powers* of the present day is busying itself especially in the affairs of the Sultan. It is impossible for any student of the Word of God not to look with thrilling interest upon all that is transpiring in the political world to-day. The awakening of the national spirit amongst the Jews, their active preparations for a return on a large scale to the land of Palestine, the state of unrest at Constantinople and throughout the lands generally where the Sultan exercises his sway, and the ever-increasing interference of Russia in those parts, are amongst the signs of the times which none but the utterly indifferent can fail to observe.

That there will be wars affecting all those countries which are contiguous to Palestine is unquestionable—wars in which this king of fierce countenance will take a prominent part; this will come before us later on, but we would again point out that there will be a policy of craft and intrigue as well; "by peace" as well as by war shall many be destroyed. But in the end he

* The reader will find this subject treated at length in a pamphlet entitled "Russia's Destiny in the Light of Prophecy," by the Editor.

will "stand up against the Prince of princes ; but he shall be broken without hand " (ver. 25).

These days are nearing rapidly. The coming of the Lord to take His Church to heaven is nearer still. May all who know Him be on their watchtowers—

"Watching and ready may we be
As those who wait their Lord to see."

CONFESSION AND PRAYER.

(DAN. ix. 1-20.)

THE portion now before us is filled with moral instruction of the most important character. For a right and intelligent understanding of its prophetic teaching, it is no doubt essential that we should study it from a correct dispensational standpoint. But it may safely be asserted that no exposition, however clear, no interpretation, however sound, will suffice unless accompanied by that attitude of soul so beautifully depicted in Daniel himself at the commencement of our chapter.

We have before observed that the chapters in the book of Daniel do not follow one another in strict chronological sequence. Chapter vi. has already described what took place in the reign of Darius the Mede, whereas chapters vii. and viii. record visions of the prophet before the Babylonian dynasty had passed away. But here in chapter ix. we find ourselves once more in the time of Darius.

Babylon had been judged. But Daniel's heart is still oppressed with a heavy burden. The "desolations of Jerusalem" still continued, Was there to be no end to this?

An expression repeatedly found in the Psalms and the Prophets will, no doubt, come to the reader's recollection. How often do we read the words, "How long, O Lord?" It is faith's question amidst days of ruin. No matter what be the dispensation, the heart that fears the Lord can never be satisfied so long as the people of God are found in misfortune and distress.

Neither Media nor Persia was the land that God had promised to Abraham, any more than was Babylon; and yet a multitude of God's people were still in captivity, and worse than that, the city of Jehovah's choice was still a heap of rubbish and desolation.

Daniel was a man of faith. Years before (chapter ii.) he had uttered his firm and solemn conviction that there was a God in heaven, that God was his God, and this captive people belonged to Him. Daniel knew enough of God to be assured that this desolation could not last for ever, deliverance must come. This it was that produced in him that attitude of soul which finds expression in the language of acknowledged need, but of expected blessing, "How long?"

But further, Daniel finds comfort and relief in turning to the Word of the Lord. As with Jeremiah a short while previously (Jer. xv. 16), so now with Daniel, "Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." He was a

diligent student of the Scripture, and not only a prophet. At the close of the chapter he was inspired of God to give forth one of the most marvellous prophetic utterances of the Old Testament, but here at the commencement he is reading with deep and prayerful attention what had already been communicated through Jeremiah.

Away in Jerusalem with broken heart and streaming eyes (Jer. ix. 1) had Jeremiah stood forth and faithfully declared the warnings of Jehovah in the midst of the rebellious nation. "The word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking, but ye have not hearkened" (Jer. xxv. 3). But now the threatened judgment is at the door, and Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, was Jehovah's servant to carry this judgment into execution (Jer. xxv. 9, xxvii. 6).

And yet amidst the desolations that were to follow, faith is not left without its consolation. "And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the King of Babylon" (Jer. xxv. 12).

Seventy years! The time had just come. We can well imagine the eager interest with which the captive in the Persian kingdom perused the letter sent by Jeremiah the prophet "from Jerusalem unto the residue of the elders which were carried away captives, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people

whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon" (Jer. xxix. 1).

Did not Daniel see in that awful night of revelry in Babylon, when the finger of God wrote upon the walls of Belshazzar's palace, "God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it"—did he not see in that the fulfilment of this very prediction? The seventy years had come, and the stroke of judgment had fallen upon Babylon.

But Jerusalem was still desolate, and Daniel was still a captive. On he reads,—“For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord; and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive” (Jer. xxix. 10-15).

The immediate effect of this discovery upon Daniel's spirit is most beautiful. Instead of

springing to his feet in an ecstasy of joy, he falls upon his knees in confession and prayer. We may surely learn a deep lesson in all this. We might safely say that not a single captive Israelite was less guilty than was Daniel, and yet in the spirit of Christ he identifies himself with the sin and failure of the nation.

Our blessed Lord and Saviour identified Himself truly with our sin after a manner that no other could. Spotless Himself, He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. In redeeming love He identified Himself with His people's sins in such a way that He bowed His head beneath the judgment of a holy God on their account. This none other could do.

“For none but He in heaven or earth
Could offer that which justice claimed.”

“*We* have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled,” says Daniel, confessing the sin of the nation as his own. “Neither have *we* hearkened unto Thy servants the prophets, which spake in Thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land” (ver. 6).

When God speaks He speaks to *all*. A principle lies here which in these days of ecclesiastical and sacerdotal pretension it is most important to hold fast. Not only did God send His message to the kings and princes, but to *all* the people of the land. When God

speaks, every soul of man is responsible to listen and obey.

“Righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of face.” Not only does Daniel condemn himself and confess his own and the nation’s sins, but he justifies God.

But with the Lord were found “mercies and forgivenesses,” although not one of the people deserved them. “The law of Moses the servant of God” had been transgressed; against God they had sinned, and “yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God.” The judgment long since threatened (see Deut. xxviii.; Lev. xxvi.) had now come, and Daniel in the energy of faith avails himself of the gracious provision of the Lord who had declared through His servant Moses, “If they shall confess their iniquity, . . . then will I remember My covenant” (Lev. xxvi. 40-46).

Daniel pleads with Jehovah on the ground of *redemption*, “And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought Thy people forth out of the land of Egypt,” &c. He pleads with Him, too, on the ground of *righteousness*, “O Lord, according to all Thy righteousness, I beseech Thee, let Thine anger and Thy fury be turned away.” If God was righteous in taking vengeance, He was righteous too in fulfilling His promise of blessing.

Yet once more does Daniel plead, and this time on the ground that low as they had

sunk, they nevertheless were the people of the Lord, "Thy city Jerusalem—Thy holy mountain—Thy people" (ver. 16). This is a beautiful climax to Daniel's petition. He can claim nothing upon the ground of what the people are in themselves, but he does present an earnest petition on the ground that they are "Thy people" and "called by Thy name."

It is beautiful, too, to see how if Daniel identified himself with the nation in their sin, he likewise links them with himself in confession, though possibly and most probably few were to be found ready to take that ground in actual fact,—“we do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousness, but for Thy great mercies” (ver. 18).

THE SEVENTY WEEKS.

(DAN. ix. 20-27.)

WE have already been considering the attitude of Daniel's soul as revealed in the opening part of this chapter.

Before passing to an examination of the prophecy at the close, it may be well to remark that the prophet in his prayer and confession dwells upon "the oath that is written in the law of Moses" (vers. 11-14), and does not allude to the promises made to Abraham. Upon the ground of those promises the Jewish people will eventually be brought into their land in blessing; but meanwhile they are put under responsibility to walk in obedience to the law.

In Leviticus xxvi. 3-14, a most beautiful picture is drawn of the earthly blessings that would have been theirs had they walked in Jehovah's statutes and kept Jehovah's commandments. Fruitful seasons, plentiful harvests, peace and prosperity, would have marked their inheritance. Jehovah Himself would have set up His tabernacle amongst them, and would have manifested to all the nations around that He, their God, dwelt and walked amongst them, and that they were His redeemed and chosen people.

Then follows a long description of the judgments, woes, and desolations that would fall upon them in the event of their disobedience. "I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies' land; even then shall the land rest and enjoy her Sabbaths" (Lev. xxvi. 33-35).

It was this very judgment that in Daniel's day was being put into execution. The captivity in Babylon, whither Daniel had been carried, was to this very end, "to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfil three score and ten years" (2 Chron. xxxvi. 21).

These seventy years were now about to end, and Daniel, deeply conscious of the desolation that had befallen the city and sanctuary of Jehovah, confessed the sin that had brought it all about. He appeals to the Lord for His forgiving mercy, "for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name." To faith they were still the people of God.

Daniel's lips were still moving in prayer when God sends the answer. This is not always the case. In the next chapter we find Daniel praying for three weeks before the answer came. Sometimes when an immediate answer is not

given we are disposed to assume that God has not heard. But this is not so. Faith may need sometimes to be tested, and there may be other reasons too, but "this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us," &c. (1 John v. 14, 15).

And now a fresh revelation is made to Daniel. "Seventy weeks are determined upon Thy people" (ver. 24). To understand the prophecy we must banish from our minds all idea of applying it to the Church, or the people of God in this present time. Daniel's people were not Christians, but Jews. "Thy holy city" was none other than Jerusalem. Indeed the whole atmosphere of the passage was Jewish. It was "about the time of the evening oblation" (ver. 21) that the prophet bent his knees in prayer. Far away from Jerusalem, deprived of the joy of treading the courts of the house of the Lord, nevertheless his thoughts were there, and God answers him according to His promise (Lev. xxvi. 40-46).

The study of Jeremiah's prophecy had brought to Daniel's soul the glad prospect of a speedy deliverance, but the Spirit of God here carries his thoughts forward to a time of blessing which has not yet been reached.

"Seventy weeks." These seventy weeks, all are agreed, represent weeks, not of days, but of years. That is to say, each day of the week stands for a year; therefore seventy weeks stand for 7×70 , that is, 490 years.

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people (*i.e.* the Jews) and upon thy holy city (*i.e.* Jerusalem), to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.”

It is to be noted how God, in His answer, takes up the very words that had been on the lips of His beloved and heart-broken servant. Daniel had been confessing as his own the sins, iniquities, and transgressions of his people, and God holds out the bright and glorious prospect that all this history of failure and guilt should end, and “everlasting righteousness” take its place. Clearly, this has not yet been fulfilled. Israel lies at this very moment under the consequences of far greater guilt than that which brought upon them the captivity in Babylon. If for seventy years they were driven from their land because of idolatry and departure from the law, what has been the greater crime which has scattered them for nearly nineteen hundred years? Is it not the rejection and murder of their Messiah, foretold in this very prophecy we are considering? And yet there is forgiveness for even this!

Some may be surprised at the thought that all the blessings enumerated in this verse are yet future. They may ask, Has not an end been made of our sins at the cross? Has not ever-

lasting righteousness been already brought in? Quite true, the believer in Christ to-day may rejoice to know that all his sins have been put away by the blood of Christ, and that he is now made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. v. 21). The Christian now may thus apply these expressions to Himself, while yet the proper fulfilment of it all for Daniel's people awaits a coming day.

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks,” &c. What a marvellous answer to Daniel's prayer is here! What an honour conferred upon this faithful servant, to reveal to him and through him to others, the very time of Messiah's advent. For the dates are here precise. The point of departure where these seventy weeks commence is given in no vague and uncertain manner. Some have thought that the passage referred to Ezra's journey to Jerusalem about B.C. 536. But the main object before Ezra was the building of the house or temple (Ezra i. 2, 3), whereas here it speaks of a commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem—not the temple, but the city. The allusion is clearly to Nehemiah i. and ii., and the date is B.C. 445.

From this date, then, the month Nisan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, unto the Messiah, the Prince, were to be reckoned sixty-nine weeks,

that is, $7 \times 69 \text{ years} = 483 \text{ years}$. But these 69 weeks are subdivided into 7 weeks and 62 weeks. It may be asked, Why is this? The 7 weeks, no doubt, was the time during which the wall was being built, "the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times." These troublous times are described in the book of Nehemiah, when the builders, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon (Neh. iv. 17). Then follow the 62 weeks, making a period of 69 weeks, or 483 years to the time of Christ.

“THE MESSIAH, THE PRINCE.”

(DAN. ix. 26).

THERE is nothing more striking than the definiteness of the dates recorded in Scripture, both historically and prophetically. Rationalistic criticism, which is ever hostile, has not hesitated to impugn the correctness of some of these dates, so far as the history of the Bible is concerned, but in result has been forced to bow and acknowledge their accuracy.

We are now considering dates which are by no means vague, and it is well to remember, whatever the “higher critics” may endeavour to prove to the contrary, that Daniel was uttering a prophecy and not recording history. The communication given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel was made in the first year of Darius the Mede (chap. ix. 1), about B.C. 538, whereas the point of departure for the seventy weeks was, as we have seen, the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (Neh. ii. 1), or B.C. 445. The very month even is stated, “And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king.”

A most interesting reckoning of dates, showing the accuracy of this prophetic period, will be found in Sir Robert Anderson’s recent work, “Daniel in the Critic’s Den.” The author writes :

"The edict for the rebuilding of Jerusalem is to be assigned to the 1st Nisan, B.C. 445. From that epoch, 'unto the Messiah, the Prince,' was to be sixty-nine sevens of prophetic years.* But 483 years of 360 days contain 173,880 days; and 173,880 days, computed from the 1st day of Nisan in the 20th year of Artaxerxes, ended on the 10th day of Nisan in the 18th year of Tiberias Cæsar—the day when, in the fulfilment of this, and of Zechariah's prophecy, our Lord made His first and only public entry into Jerusalem."

Whether we adopt the exact conclusions of the writer or no, there can be no doubt that the period of the advent of the Messiah is here intentionally most accurately specified. And, moreover, it is certain that godly souls in Israel were led at this very time to expect the coming of Christ. Wise men had come to Jerusalem from the east to worship Him, and all Jerusalem was troubled by their visit.

Simeon, in the same city, was "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Luke ii. 25); nor was he alone in this, for Anna, the prophetess, "spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (ver. 38). Besides this, the testimony of John the Baptist rang forth in the

* The prophetic year has 360 days. This will be evident to any one who compares the various ways of describing the same prophetic period, viz., "time, times, and a half" (*i.e.* $3\frac{1}{2}$ years), "forty-two months," and "1260 days."

wilderness of Judea, and in all the country about Jordan, calling upon the nation to repent. His voice was as of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

The land of Judea, and especially the city of Jerusalem, was greatly stirred; minds were in suspense, "the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ or not" (Luke iii. 15).

Priests and Levites came from Jerusalem, and sought out the Baptist in the wilderness, in their anxiety to know who the man could be that drew such crowds to the river Jordan, and John "confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ" (John i. 20).

The Christ, then, was expected, and about this very time, in fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy that "unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three score and two weeks."

But not only did Daniel foretell His advent, His rejection was as clearly predicted. "And after the three score and two weeks"—for the definite article should here be inserted—"shall Messiah be cut off." The marginal reading of the next clause is doubtless correct—"and shall have nothing." He was "born King of the Jews," "but they received Him not." Though the clearest prophecies were fulfilled at His birth and all through His life of public service, yet was the Jewish nation blind as to His Messianic glory. The gospel narrative bears ample testi-

mony to this. Scribes and Pharisees, chief priests and rulers, yes, all the religious teachers of the people, were first and foremost in His rejection, and at length fulfilled the very voices of the prophets, read every Sabbath-day in their synagogues, in condemning Him (Acts xiii. 27). "After the three score and two weeks," that is, after sixty-nine of the weeks were ended (for seven weeks had preceded the sixty-two), Messiah was cut off, and, instead of the crown of David, was given the cross; He received nothing of His earthly glory in connection with Israel. Other purposes God had in view, purposes not revealed in the prophetic writings of Old Testament times, purposes hidden until the fitting time for their revelation had come, and until that which formed the basis of their development had been accomplished in the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the consequent descent of the Holy Ghost—yes, God's eternal purpose in the calling of the Church, out of this world of Jew and Gentile, to share the heavenly glory of Christ.

Daniel was inspired to predict the cutting off and rejection of the Messiah. Thus far the prophecy has been fulfilled; sixty-nine out of the seventy have been accounted for, but the blessings of verse 24 have not yet been realised by Daniel's people. So far from that, another prince is spoken of, a prince yet to come, whose people in the past destroyed the city and the sanctuary.

If the cross of Christ has brought to the Christian infinite and eternal spiritual blessings, it has left the nation of Israel in a worse, far worse, condition than that in which they were when Daniel was a captive at Babylon.

The destruction of Jerusalem, and not its final blessing, followed the cutting off of Messiah. A people came, the Romans, under Titus, who destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, and ever since the people have been dispersed and trodden down. An evident break occurs here in the prophecy. The seventieth week is separated from the sixty-nine. The time of the cutting off of Messiah is clearly and accurately reckoned, then follows an undefined and lengthened period during which the city and sanctuary are destroyed, desolations are determined, and unrest, confusion, and war are prominent. How truly this has been the history of the Jewish nation since, yea, because of their rejection and crucifixion of Messiah, is manifest to all.

“THE PRINCE THAT SHALL COME.”

(DAN. ix. 26.)

WE have followed the course of this remarkable prophecy down to the rejection of the Messiah, the Prince, after the sixty-ninth week. We have noticed the prediction, already fulfilled, of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans under Titus, which took place about A.D. 70. We have seen, too, that there is an undefined period of time following upon this.

No hint is given in the passage before us as to the length of this unreckoned stretch of time, nor are we here told what special work of the Spirit of God was to fill up this interval between the sixty-ninth and seventieth weeks. But the intelligent Christian will be in no difficulty. The calling out of the Church takes place during this parenthetical period.

Most readers of these pages are familiar with the thought that the history of the Church upon earth, reaching from Pentecost to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the air (1 Thess. iv.), forms a break in God's dealings with the earth. In the portion of Holy Scripture we are now considering, this parenthesis, though not enlarged upon, is yet most clearly foreseen. But it will come to an end, and that in a very solemn

manner. The Lord Jesus Christ will descend from heaven into the air and remove His saints, and then once more will God take up the thread of His earthly dealings, and Israel will again become the special object of His interest.

The "city and sanctuary," then, we have seen were destroyed by the Romans. They are not mentioned by name, but it is the Romans that we are to understand by the expression, "*The people of the prince that shall come*" (ver. 26), for they it was that history informs us destroyed the city of Jerusalem.

But this expression demands a closer attention. If "the people" are the Romans, who is "the prince"? It must be evident to everybody that this cannot be the same as "the Messiah, the Prince." In no sense could the Romans have been called the people of Messiah. Nor are we to understand Titus to be that prince. Titus might have been spoken of as their prince at the time that the Romans destroyed the city, but here we are told, not that *the people* shall come, but that the *prince* shall come. He has not yet come, nor will he come until the time of the end of those desolations determined upon Daniel's people, the Jews. In other words, the Roman empire is to revive, and will yet be seen under the control of this very prince.

Those who have followed us in our study of the book of Daniel will know that the last phase of the Roman empire, that of the division into

ten kingdoms, has not yet existed. Some are in the habit of looking upon the present broken condition of what once was an undivided empire as the ten-toed period. But a passage in the Apocalypse already noticed will show that this is not the case. There we are told that "the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast" (Rev. xvii. 12). Here by the expression "the beast" we are to understand not so much the empire in itself as its *head*. The Roman empire of the future will be dominated by one man, sometimes called "the beast" (Rev. xiii. 4, xvii. 12), also spoken of as the "little horn,"* and here in our chapter "the prince that shall come" (Dan. ix. 26). At the time of the end the ten kings will give their power and strength to this terrible prince, and they shall make war with the Lamb. Clearly this has not yet taken place. In the early days of the empire it was undivided, now it is broken up into incoherent fragments, each seeking its own interests at the expense of the others; alliances, too, being formed to maintain "the balance of power." But in the coming day God will put it "in their hearts to fulfil His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast" (Rev. xvii. 17). Little does the world

* That is, the little horn of Daniel vii. The little horn of Daniel viii., we have seen, is a different personage altogether.

now guess that all is moving on to the accomplishment of God's will clearly foretold in the prophetic word !

It is this coming prince, the head of the Roman empire, that is spoken of in the last verse of our chapter. "And he shall confirm *a* covenant with *the* many for one week," for thus should the verse be read. Here, then, is the last of the seventy weeks. It has not yet commenced. No clear or intelligent interpretation of this prophecy can be given unless this point is seized. Moreover, it is not until this last week begins that prophetic time will be counted again. Ever since the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ "times and seasons" have remained unreckoned ; these have to do with the earth and God's dealings with His earthly people, Israel. The Church period is outside these times and seasons, and hence all attempts to calculate the date of Christ's return by reference to the 1260 days must end in failure.

Another line of things followed upon the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in answer to the question of the disciples, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" the risen Lord says—"It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power (or authority). But ye shall receive power * after that the Holy

* This is a different word from the one in the previous verse ; it signifies *might* or *force*—*δύναμις* (*dynamis*).

Ghost is come upon you," &c. (Acts i. 6-9). This is the period, not of the kingdom for Israel, but of the Holy Ghost's testimony to an earth-rejected but glorified Christ ; this is the time for the calling out of the Church, composed of all, whether Jew or Gentile, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

But the Jews will be restored to Palestine—they have of late been going back in large numbers—yet sad to say, their return will be in unbelief, and then for political reasons they will enter into a covenant with the chief of the Roman empire. Whether this will take place immediately upon the removal of the Church at the coming of the Lord, we do not undertake to say, but at any rate, it would seem to us the time will not be long.

This covenant will be made with "the many," that is the majority ; the remnant will not join in it, they will suffer at the hands of the ungodly nation, and the Psalms are filled with the expressions, prophetically given, that will be suitable to them in those days of oppression and persecution.

When the Roman prince confirms this covenant for one week, the Jews will imagine that he is their friend, but "in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." Through his means their whole national system will have been restored, and even, it appears, their religious ceremonial.

But in the midst of the week all this will cease, and a period of most awful tribulation will follow. "The great tribulation" will take place during *the last* half of this week, it will last for three and a half years, or as elsewhere said, 1260 days.

Some may ask, Is this prince not the Antichrist? We do not think he is. The Antichrist will be reigning *in Jerusalem* as the false king of the Jews; he will no doubt be in league with this Roman prince, and it will be through his means that the covenant will be made. But it is of importance to distinguish between the three great instruments of wickedness and opposition to God and His people at the time of the end. They are all alluded to in this last verse. They are the Roman prince, the Antichrist, and the Assyrian.

No doubt all our readers are aware that since the time of the Babylonish captivity the Jewish nation have never fallen into idolatry. They are suffering now for a greater crime, even the murder of their Messiah; but since Nebuchadnezzar carried them away they have never fallen into the sin of idolatry. According to the parable of our Lord, the unclean spirit of idolatry departed from them as a nation, and has never found a place amongst them since, though their condition be but "empty, swept, and garnished," in other words outwardly orthodox, though it were but a form without reality or power. But

at the end this spirit of idolatry will return to them in sevenfold degree, and their last state will be worse than their first (Matt. xii. 43-46). This will be when the Antichrist or man of sin will be worshipped as God in the temple once more rebuilt (2 Thess. ii.).

It is to this that the somewhat obscure expression refers, "the overspreading of abominations." Let us here give this verse in a slightly altered form, which will help to an understanding of the passage; it is a translation which all scholars will appreciate—"And he shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and on account of the overspreading (or protection) of abominations there shall be a desolator, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (ver. 27). The "overspreading of abominations" evidently refers to the idolatry under Antichrist, and "the desolator" appears to be an allusion to the Assyrian; Jerusalem herself is "the desolate."

In order to ensure themselves against this "king of the north," or Assyrian, the apostate nation will seek protection at the hands of the Roman prince and Antichrist, who will then be working hand in hand, a protection which they should have sought from God alone. They will say, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the

overflowing scourge (*i.e.* the king of the north) shall pass through, it shall not come unto us," &c. (Isa. xxviii. 15). But this their covenant will not avail them in the day of their calamity; nay, on this very account will the desolator be sent upon them—as the rod of Jehovah's anger (Isa. x. 5).

How blessed it will be for the tried and persecuted remnant in that day to prove that Jehovah Himself has laid for them in Zion, the city of their tribulation, "for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation"! (Isa. xxviii. 16). Who this precious corner stone is, we, Christians, well know, even Jesus Christ, who is to us who believe, meanwhile, God's preciousness (1 Pet. ii.).

“THIS GREAT VISION.”

(DAN. x.)

IT will easily be seen that chapters x., xi., and xii. form one continuous prophecy. At the close of the previous chapter the great power of the West, the Roman Empire, is specially in view. In the portion of the book that remains to be considered, other actors of the last days, no less important, pass before the prophet's mind in vision.

Daniel was one of those who had not availed himself of the decree of Cyrus, proclaiming liberty to the Jews to return to Jerusalem to build up the house of the Lord. This is remarkable, and lets us into the true state of the prophet's heart and conscience.

Cyrus had been raised up of God to perform all His pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, “Thou shalt be built,” &c. (Isa. xlv. 28). The inspiring Spirit had even mentioned him by name, and that about one hundred years before he had been born. In process of time, when the iniquity of God's people had reached such a pitch that there was no remedy, when even the patience of God, and such a God! had been exhausted, “to fulfil the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah,” the last King of Judah, Zedekiah, was

carried away captive to Babylon. The house of God was burnt, the wall of Jerusalem broken down, and the vessels of the Lord's house were brought to Babylon. All this had taken place, and desolations, of which Daniel was painfully aware, had swept over the pleasant land, in accordance with the solemn and unheeded warnings of the prophet Jeremiah.

But God not only spoke of judgment, He made promises of mercy, and that by the lips of the same servant through whom He had announced the judgment; and it was in fulfilment of this that "the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia," to make the decree which resulted in large numbers of the Jews returning to the land of Canaan (2 Chron. xxxvi. 22, 23; Ezra i.). This took place in the "first" year of Cyrus.

Daniel, as we have observed, did not avail himself of this, for "in the third year of Cyrus" we find him still with chastened soul "by the side of the great river, which is Hiddekel" (*i.e.*, the Tigris). This opens up a most interesting line of thought.

There was a mighty movement amongst the Jews. Some sixty thousand wended their joyous way homeward after years of captivity. "The people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem" (Ezra iii. 1). They offered freely of their substance for the house of God, they set up the altar on its bases, they laid the foundation

of the temple, and then sang together, and gave thanks to the Lord because His mercy endured for ever towards Israel (Ezra iii.). But far away by the lonely banks of the Tigris we see Daniel afflicting his soul, and humbling himself before the Lord.

Daniel knew that however great might be the blessing vouchsafed under Cyrus, it fell infinitely short of God's purposes for His people. Long weary years had yet to run before Messiah's advent; that Messiah was yet to be cut off, and greater desolations had yet to be endured by the guilty nation than ever they had known in the past. Need we wonder to hear that "in those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks"? (Dan. x. 2).

The moral attitude in which Daniel was found well suited one who walked with God in days of ruin and declension. For three weeks Daniel continued with fasting and prayer. God was about to reveal His mind to him more fully than He had done before, and in His grace produced in him that state of soul that could receive these communications without being puffed up thereby. Not only did Daniel behold with sorrow the desolate condition of the people, but he lifted up his eyes and beheld a certain man clothed in linen, girded with fine gold of Uphaz, his face as lightning, his eyes as flames of fire, his arms and feet like brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. It was the Lord

of glory who thus presented Himself before the eyes of His beloved servant. All others had fled. Daniel was left alone ; there remained no strength in him, and his comeliness was turned into corruption. And yet was there any saint of God in those days more dear than he ?

In like circumstances Job had said—"Now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself" (Job xlii. 5, 6). John, too, the beloved disciple, "fell at His feet as dead" (Rev. i. 17). There is but one place where we can learn our vileness as sinners, and our nothingness as saints—the presence of the glory of the Lord.

We now come to a deeply interesting subject, in connection with God's providential dealings with His people, and His government of the earth ; namely, the ministry of angels, and the conflict that takes place between the unseen powers of darkness and of light.

Daniel lay prostrate before the vision of the glory of the Lord, when a hand is put forth to touch him, and a certain one speaks to reassure the trembling prophet—"O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright" (ver. 11). The reason for the apparently long delay in the answer to his prayer is then given. Daniel might have felt that God had been indifferent, but it was not so, for "from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard" (ver. 12).

It seems that the one speaking in verse 12 is not the same as the man clothed in linen of verse 5. Here we have to do with an angel pure and simple, whereas there the Lord Himself appears to His servant in human form, as is frequently the case in the Old Testament Scriptures. Angels are closely connected with God's government of the earth, they are the willing ministers of His pleasure (Ps. ciii. 20, 21), not alone in the protection and deliverance of the saints (Ps. xxxiv. 7) but in the execution of His plans with reference to the earth.

But it is important to remember that there are evil spirits as well as good. Satan is called "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2), and though believers now are delivered from that power of darkness (Col. i. 13), yet he is that evil spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. Satan is not yet bound, though for faith his power is annulled (Heb. ii. 14). Nevertheless the Christian's conflict is in heavenly places with wicked spirits; for this he needs to stand with all the armour of God, that in the evil day he may overcome and not himself be vanquished.

On the first day of Daniel's prayer, a messenger had been despatched from God's presence, but for one and twenty days "the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood him" (ver. 13). All this while that the conflict was going on between these unseen powers, Daniel continues

in earnest supplication. Then "Michael, one of the chief princes," came to help. This would seem to prove that the angel here is not the Lord Himself, for it surely would not be consistent with His glory to speak of help.

The angel then informs Daniel that he has been sent to make him understand what should befall the Jewish people "in the latter days" (ver. 14). Earthly kingdoms were to rise and fall. A long vista of time opens up before the prophet's eyes. Mighty wars and tumults of the nations were to take place before the time of Israel's deliverance, but yet "the thing was true" even though "the time appointed was long."

But the Lord would not have His servant to be overwhelmed with grief and sadness. "O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong" (ver. 19). The fight might, and would continue with the powers of darkness, and yet with confidence and peace, the saint of God, intelligent in His Word, may continue his journey in calm and patient faith. "Now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will show thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth" (vers. 20, 21).

The insight that this chapter gives us into the connection between things seen and unseen is of the deepest interest, and at the same time of the utmost importance, as leading us to seek

an understanding of God's revealed mind as to all that is yet to take place on the earth. It should lead us, too, to seek a closer walk with God in prayer and holiness, lest we expose ourselves to the power that is ever seeking to frustrate His purposes and plans.

A MIGHTY KING SHALL STAND UP.

(DAN. xi. 1-4.)

IT will greatly help us in the understanding of this remarkable portion of the prophetic Scriptures if we bear in mind that chapter x. forms a kind of introduction to what follows. If this be carefully noted, it will at once show us the folly of seeking to find an interpretation by reference to persons or things connected with the Christian period.

Gabriel informs Daniel, "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people (*i.e.*, the Jews) in the latter days" (chap. x. 14). In other words, not the Pope, nor the papacy, however evil they may be, nor Napoleon, nor the Sultan, are here alluded to, but Daniel's own people, the Jews; moreover, not that portion of their history now past, but more especially that which is yet to come, occupied the mind of the Spirit, namely, "What shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days."

It is perfectly true that a considerable portion of the incidents narrated in chapter xi. have already had their fulfilment. At the time that Daniel wrote all was future, for, as we are told (chap. x. 1), the thing was revealed to him during

the third year of Cyrus, King of Persia, whereas the greater part of chapter xi. relates the wars and intrigues of the kings of the north and the south who sprang out of the Grecian Empire, an empire which followed that of the Medes and Persians. Now while it is true that all that is described was future at the time the prophecy was given, nevertheless all up to the end of verse 35 has since then been fulfilled. This is of extreme importance. Verse 36 is the break in the chapter. All before this verse, though undoubted prophecy at the time it was written, has now passed into history, whereas all after that verse is still distinct prophecy of events that have had no manner of fulfilment as yet.

The first verse of our chapter (chap. xi. 1) appears to be a parenthesis. We are not to understand that it was during the reign of Darius the Mede that the vision was seen by Daniel; this happened in the third year of Cyrus, King of Persia. There is more than one Darius mentioned in Scripture. Darius the Mede was the first king of the Medo-Persian dynasty (chap. v. 31), for, as we have already pointed out, the Median element in this composite empire came first upon the field, and gave way to the more powerful Persian. The ram, which Scripture itself informs us was the Medo-Persian kingdom (chap. viii. 20), had two horns, "but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last" (chap. viii. 3); this

higher horn was the Persian. How marvellously does all this emphasise the fact of inspiration, for how else could Daniel have written all this in such brief terms before the events had taken place.

The reason why mention is made of Darius the Mede in chapter xi. 1 is to show that the angelic messenger described in chapter x. is Gabriel, who was the chosen instrument to make known to Daniel the prophecy of the seventy weeks (compare chap. ix. 1, 21, and chap. xi. 1).

"Now will I show thee the truth" (xi. 2). With what certainty does the heavenly messenger speak! How briefly, too, and with what exactitude were the events revealed to the prophet before they had taken place.

"There shall stand up yet three kings in Persia." It was during the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia, that the prophecy was given. Three kings were to stand up in Persia after Cyrus. This was exactly fulfilled in the history which followed; the names of these monarchs were Cambyses, Smerdis the Magian, and Darius Hystaspes. We do not, however, need to resort to profane history in this matter, for in Ezra iv. these three kings are mentioned, though under different names.

Cyrus, King of Persia, had given commandment to "build the house of the Lord God of Israel (He is the God) which is in Jerusalem"

(Ezra i. 3), but adversaries had been stirred up to frustrate this purpose, and the work ceased until "the second year of Darius, King of Persia" (Ezra iv. 24). This is not the same Darius as Darius the Mede of Daniel xi. 1. Now in Ezra iv. two other kings are mentioned as reigning between Cyrus and Darius, namely, Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes. These two are the same as Cambyses and Smerdis that we read of in profane history. All this shows the marvellous accuracy of the prophecy given before these different kings had arisen.

But there is more. "The fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia" (Dan. xi. 2). No one in the smallest degree familiar with the history of those times will have any doubt as to who this king was. It was Xerxes, whose vast riches enabled him to lead his immense host of five millions against the little Grecian nation.

"And a mighty king shall stand up." We have now left the Persian Empire behind, and the remainder of the chapter is occupied with the description of the various alliances and conflicts that took place between certain kings that arose out of the Grecian Empire. The mighty king that stood up first was Alexander the Great. He has been already alluded to in Daniel viii. as the great horn of the he-goat (vers. 5, 8). When this great horn was broken—in other

words, upon the death of Alexander—four notable horns arose toward the four winds of heaven (viii. 8). This same fourfold division of Alexander's kingdom is alluded to in our chapter (xi. 4)—“When he shall stand up, his kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided towards the four winds of heaven.” But another detail is added which confirms again the marvellous accuracy of the prophetic word; when this kingdom of Alexander's was divided, it was “not to his posterity.” In other words, it was not divided amongst his children or descendants. We know from history that when Alexander was suddenly and unexpectedly cut off whilst leading an expedition far away from his own country, his generals held a council to decide what was best to be done, and eventually agreed to divide his vast dominions amongst four of themselves. The fact is noted of the fourfold division, though as only two of these came in contact with the history of God's people and the land of Palestine, these two only are enlarged upon. The king of the north and the king of the south that we read of in the remainder of chapter xi. were two of the divisions of Alexander's kingdom.

The object that God has in the Bible is not to occupy the mind with histories of nations, however important they may be in the eyes of men, but to narrate just so much as was needed to elucidate His ways with His own chosen nation, Israel. Those nations only were of importance

that were linked up with God's dealings with that despised and oppressed people. It has been so in the past, it will still be proved to be so in the future.

India, China, Japan, Africa may absorb the thoughts of men to-day, but Palestine is the land upon which the eyes of the Lord rest from one year's end to the other.

THE KINGS OF THE NORTH AND SOUTH.

(DAN. xi. 5-21.)

WE come now to the account which the Spirit of God has given of the two kings who, proceeding from the Grecian Empire, came into very close contact with Palestine and the Jewish people.

We have observed that on the death of Alexander the Great, his vast kingdom was divided and broken into four parts, two of which are passed over in silence in God's Word. The remaining two, here called the king of the north and the king of the south, are described with striking detail. It may be well to remark that throughout this chapter (Dan. xi.) they are not the same kings of the north and south, but a series of them; a period of about 130 years elapsing between verses 5 and 20, namely, from about the date of the death of Alexander the Great down to the accession of Antiochus Epiphanes, the "vile person" of verse 21.

Another remark it may be well to make before proceeding, for the sake of those who have not yet given much attention to this profoundly interesting portion of the prophetic scriptures, is this, that the titles borne by these

kings have reference to their position with regard to the land of Palestine, God's centre so far as the affairs of nations are concerned. The God who inspired Daniel to write in brief terms such an accurate description of vast campaigns, political alliances, and intrigues for reasons of State, and that, be it remembered, before the actors had yet come upon the stage, could with just as great ease have given the names of these various men and women had He so seen fit. Had He not already done so in the case of Cyrus (Isa. xliv. 28) already alluded to? But He would emphasise the importance in His eyes of that narrow little strip of land, the land of Palestine, hence the land of Egypt, being south of Palestine, its king is called the king of the south, whereas, for a like reason, the king of Syria and the surrounding country is called the king of the north. The fact of their position in reference to the land of God's choice was of greater importance than the names of the various kings who were to hold sway over those countries. So accurate, however, is the description here given by the Spirit of God, that by comparing each statement, brief as these statements may be, with the facts recorded in profane history, the names may be filled in in almost, if not in every instance.

The portion of the chapter which remains to be expounded (Dan. xi. 5-45) may be divided into three paragraphs.

The first (vers. 5-21), as we have observed, covers a period of about 130 years. "The king of the south shall be strong, and one of his princes" (ver. 5)—this was Ptolemy Soter, one of Alexander's generals—"and he shall be strong above him." The "he" in this clause was Seleucus Nicator, the first king of the north. Of him it is said that "his dominion shall be a great dominion," and this is important to observe, for sometimes it is supposed that the king of the north was more or less confined to what is called Syria; whereas, in point of fact, Seleucus Nicator held sway over a vast stretch of territory extending from Macedonia to the borders of India. We may refer to this later on. Ptolemy Soter died in B.C. 284, and was succeeded by his son, Ptolemy Philadelphus, who is alluded to in the next verse (ver. 6).

Philadelphus reigned a long time, especially when we remember the turbulent state of affairs in those days, hence it is said, "In the end of years" (ver. 6)—for Ptolemy had been on the throne of Egypt thirty-six years when the alliance took place which is here alluded to—"they (*i.e.*, the kings of the north and south) shall join themselves together."

The king of the north who was now reigning was named Antiochus Theus. He was weary of the incessant strife in which he was involved, and in order to put an end to this, so far as the king of the south was concerned, he entered into

a marriage alliance. "The king's daughter of the south shall come to the king of the north to make an agreement;" this was Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus, who in B.C. 249 was brought by her father with great pomp and ceremony to Syria, and there married to Antiochus, who divorced his wife Laodice in order to ratify the alliance more firmly. But all this intriguing came to nothing, as is well known from the history here so marvellously epitomised, for Berenice, upon the death of her father, was imprisoned by Antiochus, thus fulfilling the prophecy, "She shall not retain the power of the arm;" and Antiochus in his turn was poisoned by Laodice, his former wife, and so was fulfilled what is here said, "Neither shall he stand, nor his arm."

By this time Philadelphus Euergetes was on the throne of Egypt, and made strenuous efforts to liberate his sister Berenice and her son from their prison. It is he who is referred to in verse 7, "Out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate," that is, in the estate of "him that strengthened her in these times" (ver. 6), *i.e.*, her father. The accuracy of the description is here remarkable. All that is so briefly narrated in verses 6 and 7 was fulfilled to the very letter. Not only was Berenice slain, but her son likewise; and here it may be well to draw attention to the marginal reading in verse 6, which is the correct one, "She shall

be given up (*i.e.*, Berenice) . . . and he whom she brought forth (*i.e.*, her son), and he that strengthened her in these times (*i.e.*, her father)."

Now Ptolemy Euergetes came to the throne on the death of his father Philadelphus, who being likewise the father of Berenice, it is said, "Out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up," &c. Profane history tells us of the inroad into Syria that is here mentioned. Euergetes gathered an army together in order to rescue his sister from the fortress of the king of the north where she was imprisoned, but reaching there too late, for she and her son had both been slain, he vented his wrath upon her murderers by making himself master of a large portion of Syria as far as Babylon, as it is said in Daniel's prophecy, "He shall come with an army . . . and shall deal against them and prevail" (ver. 7). But not only so, profane history tells us that he brought back to his own land vast treasures of gold and silver, "forty thousand talents of silver, a vast number of precious vessels of silver and gold, and images also to the number of two thousand five hundred, amongst which were many of the Egyptian idols which Cambyzes on his conquering Egypt carried thence into Persia," &c.

All this is here briefly and accurately described by the Spirit of God before the events took place : he "shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious

vessels of silver and gold" (ver. 8.) In passing we may observe that this verse places beyond doubt the signification of the terms north and south in this chapter, for Egypt is here given as the land of the king of the south; so true is it that Scripture is amply sufficient for its own explanation. A knowledge of the histories written by men may be of great interest for comparing with what is given in Scripture, but it is not by any means a necessity for the understanding of the latter. It is added, "He shall continue more years than the king of the north" (ver. 8). This likewise was fulfilled, inasmuch as Seleucus Callinicius, who was the king of Syria at that time, died four years before Euergetes, in B.C. 225.

The king of the south of verse 11 was Ptolemy Philopator, the son of Euergetes, and what is recorded in this verse was accurately fulfilled in the war that was waged by him against Antiochus the Great, the then king of the north. According to profane history, Ptolemy vanquished him at the battle of Raphia, in spite of the great multitude he had gathered together. Many thousands were slain, and a great multitude were taken captive, and yet, we are told, "he (*i.e.*, the king of the south) shall not be strengthened by it" (ver. 12), and so it turned out, for all that Ptolemy gained by his victory, he squandered in his voluptuous living.

It is the same king of the north that is

described from verse 13 to the end of verse 19. Some years after the conflict alluded to in verse 12, Antiochus renewed the war with Ptolemy Epiphanes, the son of Philopator. Thirteen or fourteen years had intervened. He "shall certainly come *after certain years* with a great army" (ver. 13) the prophet had before announced, and so it came to pass.

"In those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south" (ver. 14), and so indeed they did, for the kings of Macedonia and Syria combined against him, and conspiracies arose in many quarters. But not only so, "The robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision." These were apostates from amongst Daniel's own people, the Jews, who sided with Ptolemy, forsaking the law of their God, and turning their backs upon Jehovah to do so. "But they shall fall," for Antiochus gained the mastery, and all who helped him, these very apostates included, were cut off.

Every detail of these verses, if compared with profane history, will be found to have had a perfect and accurate fulfilment. To enter into all the details would occupy too much space, but we must draw attention to the expression in verse 16, "He (*i.e.*, the king of the north) shall stand in the glorious land." This is an additional proof that we are here in the midst of scenes and circumstances that have to do, not with Christians,

but with Jews. The glorious land is Palestine. However dark the days may have been in the past, however dark and infinitely darker they will yet be, faith can reckon on God amidst it all, and call that land which He will yet choose as the scene of the display of Messiah's glory, the glorious land.

Verse 17 refers to the attempt of the king of the north to do by stratagem what he failed to accomplish by force. Once again a marriage alliance takes place between these kings, only this time it is the daughter of the king of the north, Cleopatra (not the Cleopatra of the Roman period), that was joined in matrimony to the king of the south. The object of this, in the mind of Antiochus, was that Cleopatra should betray her husband into his hands, which is what the Scripture means by the expression "corrupting her" (ver. 17). But this did not succeed, as history relates, and as prophecy had foretold.

Antiochus then turns his arms towards the isles, that is, the Grecian Isles. There for a time he succeeded until he finds himself confronted by a prince whose people had been reproached by this invasion. These were the Romans, under whose protection these isles had placed themselves. Lucius Scipio, the Roman consul, defeated Antiochus in battle, and thus caused the reproach to turn upon Antiochus himself, who returned to his own land, and soon after came to his end.

The next verse (ver. 20) describes the brief reign of Seleucus Philopator, the son of Antiochus the Great, the chief part of whose time was occupied in collecting the taxes imposed upon him by the Romans. There was nothing of any particular note during his time. His life was cut short through the treachery of one of his personal friends, and not in battle or through any sedition amongst his people.

It may seem to some a strange and unnecessary thing to spend so much time over this portion of the Scripture. But everything that God has seen fit to reveal we may well study with attention. Furthermore, no serious student of these verses can fail to be deeply impressed with the overwhelming evidence that they contain of the verbal inspiration of Holy Writ. Remembering that Daniel wrote before the events took place which we have now been describing, it would be impossible to conceive that he could forecast the future so accurately by mere guesswork. Nothing but divine inspiration can account for this stupendous marvel. "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man ; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21).

"A VILE PERSON."

(DAN. xi. 21-36.)

WE come now to the second of the three paragraphs (vers. 21-36) into which our chapter is divided.

The Spirit of God, though entering into considerable detail, had passed with comparative rapidity over the previous history of the kings of the north and the south. A period of 130 years had been described from verse 5 to 21, but here we cannot but be struck with a change, for in the section now before us, ten years only (B.C. 175 to B.C. 165) are under review. In the former division, many successive kings are referred to, whereas here one king only occupies the prophet's vision. This is the notorious Antiochus Epiphanes, most appropriately named "a vile person."

The question naturally arises, Why should so much more notice be taken of the king whose reign did not exceed ten years? The answer is that Antiochus Epiphanes was to be a type of another king who has not yet arisen; and bad as Antiochus was, this other will be infinitely worse. Both the one and the other were to come into close contact with the affairs of Palestine and the Jews, and this it is that gives them importance in the sight of God, for God's

heart and interest is with His people, however unworthy they may prove themselves to be.

The accuracy of the description here given, is as remarkable as what we have already noticed in the previous part of the chapter, leaving no possible doubt that the Spirit of God had Antiochus Epiphanes in view when He inspired Daniel to give this wonderful forecast of the future.

According to profane history, Antiochus, who was the brother of Seleucus, the previous king of the north, was on his return from Rome when the news of the death of his brother reached him, and also of the attempts being made by the murderer of his brother, to usurp the throne for himself. Ptolemy, King of Egypt, was likewise plotting to keep him out, and so were fulfilled the prophet's words, "to whom they shall not give the honour of the kingdom" (ver. 21), that is to say, he succeeded to the throne in spite of the attempts being made to deprive him of the honour of the kingdom. But for all that he came in peaceably, for when in Greece, on his way back from Rome, he obtained the assistance of two powerful kings, by whose means the usurper was suppressed, and Antiochus himself placed on the throne. It was then that he took the name of Epiphanes, or *the illustrious*, but owing to his vile and despicable character, he was commonly nicknamed Epimanes, or *the madman*.

The character given of Antiochus by Josephus and other historians shows how well he earned

the title here given anticipatively by the Spirit of God, "a vile person," for this he was in truth, but what was of more importance still, and what in the eyes of the God of Israel was greater guilt on his part, he was a wicked persecutor of the Israel of God. True, that people had rendered themselves liable to chastisement by their own unfaithfulness, but God will not allow those to go unpunished who, for selfish motives, injure and persecute His people.

In order to retain Palestine in his possession, and utilise the Jewish nation in one of his expeditions into Egypt, Antiochus entered into a league with the brother of the high priest, in order to supplant him in the office, and scattered honours and money amongst certain Jews, who turned their backs upon the holy covenant. All this is alluded to in verses 23 and 24. At first all went well, and the Egyptians were defeated. Ptolemy fell into his hands, but instead of killing him, Antiochus received him at his table, though this appearance of friendship was a mere pretence, as is here said, "they shall speak lies at one table" (ver. 27).

But the designs of Antiochus did not prosper, so he returned to his own land, carrying thither the riches he had amassed during his expedition. A rumour had reached Jerusalem that he was dead, and this created such rejoicing there, that Antiochus was stirred with rage against the Jews—"his heart shall be against the holy covenant"

(ver. 28). On his way back to Syria, he stopped at Jerusalem, and by means of the traitors amongst the Jews, he took possession of the city. It was on this occasion that he penetrated into the temple, and there in mockery offered up a sow on the altar, and caused the broth to be scattered over the sanctuary, thus defiling the holy places, and causing the sacrifices to cease. This is alluded to in chapter viii. in the parenthetical clause of verses 11, 12. We have already noticed the change from "it" to "he" in that clause. The "it" of verse 10, and the latter half of verse 12, is the little horn, or the last king of the north; the "he" is the one who typified this last king, in other words, Antiochus Epiphanes. The cleansing of the sanctuary (chap. viii. 13, 14), we believe, refers to what took place some four years after this awful desecration, when Judas Maccabæus recovered Jerusalem out of the hands of the heathen.

Now comes the inspired account of the last expedition made by Antiochus into Egypt (chap. xi. 29-35). "But it shall not be as the former," that is, it would be unattended by the partial successes of former times; but neither shall it be "as the latter," that is, humiliating as this defeat was to be, it would be as nothing compared to the disaster that should overwhelm, in days that are yet future, the king of the north, of whom Antiochus was the type.

In verse 30, we are told what was the real

cause of his defeat, "the ships of Chittim shall come against him" (ver. 30). Here, then, we have the intervention of a western power. It is the Romans that we are to understand by "the ships of Chittim," and this is the first allusion in our chapter in a direct manner to this now rapidly rising people. The circumstances under which Antiochus met the Roman Consul at Alexandria are well known, and were especially humbling to his pride. The Egyptian monarch, fearing the worst if his opponent were allowed to continue his conquests unchecked, had sent to the Roman Senate an abject appeal for assistance. In answer to this, they at once despatched their representative, who met Antiochus just as he was about to lay siege to Alexandria. Antiochus, recognising in the Roman envoy one with whom he had been on terms of great friendship while on a visit to Rome, approached him with extended hand ready to greet him as of old. This the Roman refused, saying, that before he could treat him as a friend, he must know how he stood toward those whose representative he was. He then told him that the Roman Senate bade him leave Egypt forthwith. The artful Antiochus requested time to confer with his friends, but the Roman envoy drawing a circle around him with his wand on the sand, required an answer before he stepped out of the circle.

Antiochus was forced to yield, and he returned

to his own land a humbled man. "Therefore he shall be grieved, and return" (ver. 30). This, however, did not prevent him wreaking his vengeance upon the Jewish people. But the Spirit of God is careful to distinguish between the faithful ones amongst them and the apostates. It was by means of these latter, "them that forsake the holy covenant," that the wicked king manifested his hatred against God and His people.

Nevertheless on this occasion, Antiochus himself did not visit Jerusalem, but sent one of his generals, and this, we suppose, is the meaning of the expression, "arms shall rise from him" (ver. 31), for his general it was who polluted the sanctuary of strength, that is the temple, abolishing the daily sacrifice, and placing an idol in the holy place.

We are not to suppose that this is what is alluded to by our Lord in Matthew xxiv. It is a very similar expression, but there is a difference. The abomination of desolation referred to in this chapter (Dan. xi. 31), was what took place in the days of Antiochus, the antitype of the last king of the north; it was a foreshadowing, no doubt, of that to which our Lord referred as immediately preceding His appearance in judgment, but the verse in Daniel that our Lord quoted, is found in the next chapter (xii. 11). In brief, Daniel xi. 31 has been already accomplished, whereas Daniel xii. 11 awaits its fulfilment.

But the state of things during these days of Antiochus Epiphanes bore a striking analogy to what is yet to take place, only that bad as has been the past, the future will be incomparably worse. Whilst Antiochus did all in his power by flattery and other means to incite the Jews to apostatise from God and His holy covenant, the Spirit of God energised a band of faithful men, "the people that do know their God" (ver. 32). These were the Maccabees and others, who by their words and actions set an example of devotedness before the rest, which God used to keep the people from completely yielding to the terrible pressure of the times.

That there will be a remnant in the future is clear, but their testimony will not be accompanied by deeds of prowess and exploits in the field, as it was in the days of the Maccabees; when persecuted in one city they are exhorted to flee unto another, and not to take the sword. In short, while the points of similarity between these days of Antiochus in the past, and of the future under Antichrist, are sufficiently clear to make it evident that the Spirit of God was applying the one in an antitypical manner to the other, yet the differences are sufficient to prove that the same period is not described.

The point of chief importance for the intelligent understanding of the chapter is this, that the break between the past and the future occurs just here (ver. 35.) Even if there were no other

reason, it is suggested by the verse itself, "it is yet for a time appointed" (ver. 35).

From verse 5 right on to this point we have been able to follow step by step the details of past history. No one reading the profane history of those times can fail to perceive the exactness of the description given by the prophet *up to this point*. But from verse 36, all is vague. Blind unbelief—for what else is the so-called higher criticism?—has argued from this that there was no Daniel living at the time of Cyrus, King of Persia (chap. x. 1), for it would have been too great a miracle that any one should have been able to describe so accurately the events of history before they happened! The writer of the book of Daniel, say they, must have lived during the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, for he was able to record with perfect exactitude the whole history up to that reign, whereas he could only guess as to what followed! How sad to find such men as Dean Farrar joined with the heathen writer of the second century, Porphyry, in this glaring infidelity. "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God" (Matt. xxii. 29).

When Daniel wrote, all that is in this chapter was future, it was prophecy pure and simple. But up to the end of verse 35 has now passed into history; from verse 36 all is yet distinct prophecy.

“THE TIME OF THE END.”

(DAN. xi. 33-40.)

WE have now reached that important part of the prophecy to which all that precedes has been leading step by step. The period of Antiochus Epiphanes has been especially dwelt on, for he it was that typified the last and yet future king of the north. His history has been described down to the end of verse 32.

But now a break of a most distinct kind occurs in the chapter. The next three verses (33-35) describe a long and protracted period of Jewish history extending from the days of Antiochus Epiphanes right on to “the time of the end.” During this period the prophetic word foretold that the Jewish people should be persecuted and scattered, “They shall fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil many days.” The protracted nature of their dispersion and suffering is here predicted. Nevertheless they were not to be utterly abandoned, “they shall be holpen with a little help.”

Besides this a band of faithful men were to be raised up, “they that understand among the people,” and these were to “instruct the many.” These men of wisdom and spiritual understanding for the times are referred to in chapter xi. 33, 35, and in chapter xii. 3, 10. Doubtless the

Maccabees of the time of Antiochus Epiphanes were men of this nature, even as there will be faithful men in the time to come, who will be used of God to encourage and strengthen the persecuted remnant. Some even of these "wise" ones will be allowed to fall, which will put the faithful remnant to a terrible test. It will seem to them as though God Himself had forsaken them, and indeed it is this mocking taunt that their enemies amongst the ungodly nation of Israel will throw in their face. During the time of the great tribulation this will be specially the case. Psalms xlii. and xliii. give a vivid description of it. Driven out of Jerusalem because of the fearful idolatry under Antichrist (see Matt. xxiv.), oppressed by their enemies, apparently forgotten by God, the taunt of unbelief, "Where is thy God?" will be as a sword in their very bones. But this great tribulation will immediately precede the moment of their deliverance. We shall not continue this subject here, but merely point out again the striking parenthesis in our chapter, separating the days of Antiochus Epiphanes from the last days under Antichrist. The whole of the present period of Israel's dispersion is included in verses 33, 34, and 35.

The next four verses (vers. 36-40) introduce with remarkable abruptness an individual who may be truly said to exert the most baneful influence upon the affairs of Palestine, and indeed of Western Europe, "The king shall do

according to his will" (ver. 36). The king here spoken of must not be confounded with any of the kings of the north or south which we find mentioned in our chapter. Verse 40 clearly proves that he is distinct from these, for "at the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him;" evidently then he is not the king of the south, inasmuch as that king attacks him. But further it is added, "And the king of the north shall come against him," &c., so that here we have a king distinct from those two who hold sway over the regions north and south of Palestine. He is one dwelling between the two who becomes the point of attack by each of them. In other words he has the land of Palestine itself as his kingdom. Further proof of this will be given as we proceed.

In Isaiah we find the same individual introduced in the same abrupt manner. In chapter xxx., after a description of Israel's desolate condition, the bright day of Jehovah's intervention on their behalf is foretold, He who "bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." Jehovah in that day will take up their cause, and will deal in a summary manner with all their enemies. "A song as in the night" and "gladness of heart" will then be the portion of His repentant people. "The Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard," and through that voice that then will speak in judgment upon their foes shall the

Assyrian be beaten down, who once had smitten them with a rod. The Assyrian is the same as the king of the north, and in these chapters of Isaiah we find described the judgment of the last king of the north. The devouring fire shall be his portion (Isa. xxx. 30-33, xxxi. 8, 9), but not his only, "For Tophet is ordained of old; for the king also * it is prepared; He hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it." "The king" shares the same awful fate as the Assyrian. He is the same individual, we believe, as is elsewhere spoken of as the false prophet (Rev. xix.), who is cast alive into the lake of fire.

Again, in Isaiah lvii. this same terrible king of apostate Israel's choice is referred to. The unclean spirit of idolatry (Matt. xii. 43-46) will yet take possession of the nation, and in that day the Antichrist, who will be reigning in Jerusalem as the false Messiah, will be the chief object of their idolatrous veneration. "Thou wentest to the king with ointment"—this same wicked king—but this acknowledgment on their part of one so evil, will in the eyes of God, be as though they debased themselves unto hell (Isa. lvii. 9).

One chief characteristic of this king is that he "shall do according to his will." It was this doing of his own will that was the essence of

* This is the correct translation.

man's first fall, and ever since then has been the cause of his moral ruin and departure from God. It is the snare into which every son and daughter of fallen Adam is constantly liable to fall, and against it every one should watch, be they old or young. It may seem but a slight matter, but it is the root principle of sin, for sin is lawlessness* and not merely the transgression of the law. Lawlessness is simply man doing his own will, and nothing is more terrible than an unbridled will. In this the Antichrist will be the direct opposite to the Christ of God, who came not to do His own will but the will of Him that sent Him. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. x.).

That this wilful king is none other than the man of sin or Antichrist is manifest from a comparison of what is said of each in Daniel xi. 36 and 2 Thessalonians ii. 4 respectively. Almost the identical words are used by the Spirit of God in each case: "He shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished." Here, then, we have one who seeks to usurp the place of God Himself. Some of our readers might be disposed to say that this must be the papacy, if not the Pope of Rome personally. Now while it is true that this

* This is the proper translation of this passage. "Sin is lawlessness" (1 John iii. 4).

latter does assume a place that belongs to God alone, yet there are weighty reasons why he and the man of sin are two separate individuals.

It is evident that "the king" here described, as well as the man of sin of 2 Thessalonians, are in close connection with Palestine and the Jewish nation. Of the latter it is said that "he sitteth in the temple of God"; this is not St Peter's at Rome, but the temple at Jerusalem, which, according to the prophetic word, is to be rebuilt. While of the former we read that he "shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished." This is the time so repeatedly spoken of by the prophet Isaiah in connection with the Jews (Isa. x. 5-25; Dan. viii. 19).

Further evidence of his Jewish connection is afforded by the verses that follow: "Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers;" for a godly Jew this was of all moment, his confidence was in the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, but the Antichrist will not regard Him, "nor the desire of women." This latter phrase points to the true Messiah who was the object of hope for all who waited for redemption in Israel, and of whom pious women amongst the Jews desired to be the mother. More than this, "the king" will be utterly infidel, for he will not "regard any god," whether the true God or any of the false gods of the heathen. "He shall magnify himself above all." What a terrible thing is man without God!

The next verse at first sight seems a contradiction of what has just been said, for we are told that "in his estate shall he honour the God of forces," that is, instead of regarding the true God, the Antichrist will have an idolatrous object of veneration, here called "the god of forces." This is a somewhat obscure expression, which seems to point to something of a military character. Some have thought that the word here used (*Mahuzzim*, see margin) signifies *hidden* forces, and in this case there may be an allusion as well to the forces of spiritism and the occult sciences, so-called. At any rate, we know from 2 Thessalonians ii. that the man of sin will be possessed of a power to work miracles, and we can easily understand how this may produce a spirit of superstitious veneration amongst those who have given up belief in the true God, as revealed in Christ, His Son.

In this passage (Dan. xi.), as we have before observed, the reference is to matters purely Jewish, "He shall divide the land for gain"—*the land*, this is Palestine, for none other would so be spoken of by the Spirit of God in this connection. At the same time other Scriptures show that the Antichrist comes into close contact with apostate Christendom (see 2 Thess. ii.).*

It is a solemn thing to see at work to-day all

* The reader is referred to a little book entitled, "The Man of Sin : Who Will He Be?" James Carter, 13 Paternoster Row, E.C. Price 1d.

the influences that are so soon, it may be, to produce the veritable personage here described. Infidelity is rampant, spiritism is on the increase, the Jewish people are moving Zionwards in a spirit of unbelief, ready to accept the false king, who will be revealed as soon as the Lord removes the Church to heaven, and the Spirit of God, the hindering power, is taken out of the way.

We are not here (Dan. xi.) informed how "the king" comes to an end, for in the verses that follow (40-45) it is the king of the north, and not "the king" or Antichrist that is described. The New Testament tells us that it will be at the manifestation of Christ, when He comes in glory, that "the wicked one," this very king, will be consumed.

"THE LAND OF EGYPT SHALL NOT ESCAPE."**(DAN. xi. 40-43.)**

FOR an intelligent understanding of the closing verses of our chapter, it is essential that we should clearly distinguish between "the king" of verse 36 and the king of the north of verse 40.

In this chapter the description of "the king" or Antichrist terminates as abruptly as it commences, and from verse 40 he is lost sight of completely. In the New Testament we are clearly shown how and under what circumstances he meets his end (see 2 Thess. ii. 8, and compare Isa. xi. 4; Rev. xix. 20). The king of Daniel xi. 36, the man of sin of 2 Thessalonians ii. 4, and the false prophet of Revelation xix., are all one and the same individual under different titles and in different connections.

At the time of the end, a time to which all things appear to be rapidly tending, the Antichrist will be reigning in Jerusalem as the false king of the apostate Jewish people. He will have as his ally in Western Europe the revived Roman Empire, called in Revelation "the Beast." The Beast, as we saw from Daniel ix. 27, will in the end make a covenant with the mass of the Jews, through the instrumentality of Antichrist. It is this that is alluded to in Isaiah xxviii.

The proud and scornful rulers of the people in Jerusalem are there described as saying, "We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement," their object being to protect themselves against a most powerful adversary that Jehovah will use as the rod of His indignation. "Behold, the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which as a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand. The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim, shall be trodden under feet" (Isa. xxviii. 2, 3). In order to protect themselves from this impending danger, the Jewish people make their agreement with the Beast, and boastfully exclaim, "When the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us," &c. (Isa. xxviii. 15); but all is in vain, for the stone laid in Zion, as a sure foundation of peace and security for the tried and faithful remnant, will fall in overwhelming power upon the apostate nation, and their covenant with death shall be disannulled, and their agreement with hell shall not stand; the overflowing scourge shall pass through, and they shall be trodden down by it. Isaiah is here announcing by inspiration the very invasion of Palestine by the last king of the north, that Daniel two hundred years after was inspired to foretell with other and greater detail.

If the idolatrous king in Palestine has an ally

in the Beast, he will also have two powerful adversaries in the kings of the north and the south. "At the time of the end shall the king of the south push at him." Jerusalem will be at that time—and oh! how near the time may be—the focus for mighty events. Not much is said here about the king of the south. In this same chapter the king of the south is unmistakably identified with Egypt, though it would be going too far to confine his sphere of authority to that region which now goes by the name of Egypt. Indeed, we gather as much from verse 43, where we are told that Libya and Ethiopia as well as Egypt come under the conquering sway of the king of the north. Libya, we know, extended right across Northern Africa, in fact, it seems to be a term almost synonymous with Africa, or at any rate of as much of that continent as was known at that time. We are all aware of the events that have recently transpired in South Africa, and of the aspirations of politicians to make of that vast country one united empire. Might not the whole, "from the Cape to Cairo," be included in the scriptural designation of the king of the south? If the territory of the king of the north extends far beyond the immediate borders of Palestine on the north, why may not a similar extension take place in the case of the king of the south? For ourselves we may say that the thought has been gaining strength, that the king of the south will be a much more

important factor in the future development of the affairs of this earth than many are aware of. Nothing is of any real importance to God except what directly concerns the glory of His beloved Son and His people, whether earthly or heavenly, in connection with Him. Africa may be the all-absorbing topic of the present moment in the eyes of men, but we may be assured of this, that all the feverish activity of nations is only preparing the way for the carrying out of God's plans in reference, not to Egypt, Africa, Europe, or Russia, but to Palestine and Jerusalem. This is not the fitting occasion to dwell further upon this most interesting subject, but we commend it to the attention of the Christian reader, and later on hope to discuss it more fully.

Not only will the king of the south push his armed hosts against the king in Jerusalem, but "the king of the north shall come against him like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships." Here, then, we have a vast military and naval power sweeping down from the north upon the land of Palestine. "He shall enter into the countries, and shall overflow and pass over;" that is, the countries adjoining Palestine fall into his hands. "He shall enter also into the glorious land," that is, the land of Palestine, glorious not so much in the eyes of men, for this Babylon was (Isa. xiii. 19), but glorious in His eyes, who long years ago had brought up His people from their land of

bondage into a land which He "had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands" (Ezek. xx. 6).

While everything seems to give way before the victorious progress of this mighty king, the Spirit of God enumerates three of the countries in close proximity to Palestine who will "escape out of his hand"; these are, "Edom, and Moab, and the chief of the children of Ammon." An indirect evidence of the inspiration of Scripture, and that of the most striking nature, is here afforded, as well as one of the numerous instances with which the Bible is full, which show how all Scripture hangs together. Many hands were used of God in producing the volume which Christians receive as the Word of God, and these living in countries far removed from one another, and at times separated by long distance one from the other, even centuries, as in this case, and yet each part is in perfect consistence with all the others. Isaiah had mentioned these same three countries, and had prophesied that at the time when Israel should be restored to their own land, the very time here under review, they, that is Israel, should "lay their hand upon Edom and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them" (Isa. xi. 14). Ezekiel also was inspired to write of these three countries about the same time as Daniel (Ezek. xxv.), and he likewise announces their judgment at the hands, not of the king of the north, but of Israel. "I will lay

my vengeance upon Edom by the hand of my people Israel," &c. (Ezek. xxv. 14).

But more than this, Ezekiel declares the reason of this exception. "Son of man, set thy face against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them; and say unto the Ammonites, Hear the word of the Lord God; Thus saith the Lord God; Because thou saidst, Aha, against My sanctuary when it was profaned; and against the land of Israel, when it was desolate; and against the house of Judah, when they went into captivity," &c. It might be, and it was, perfectly true that the desolations of that land, and the captivity of that beloved people, were inflicted by the chastening hand of Jehovah Himself, but they were His people for all that, and God will not permit the fleshly heart of unbelief to rejoice over the afflictions of His people. "Because thou hast clapped thine hands, and stamped with the feet, and rejoiced in heart with all thy despite against the land of Israel; behold, therefore, I will stretch out Mine hand upon thee, and I will deliver thee for a spoil to the heathen . . . and thou shalt know that I am the Lord" (Ezek. xxv. 6, 7). These are solemn words, and we do well to ponder them deeply in our souls, for there is ever a tendency for the flesh to find pleasure in the troubles that may befall those against whom, for some reason or other, we may be at variance. This spirit is not pleasing to the Lord.

Moreover, God does not pass over the violence

of man against His people (see Obadiah), and in the end will execute the judgment which lingers long.

Grace affords a means of escape to each individual who repents, and turns to God in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but the judgment upon Edom nationally is one of the most solemn instances in Scripture of the doom that awaits unrepentant sinners. In the day in which it will be said that "upon Mount Zion shall be deliverance," then, too, there "shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau (Edom); for the Lord hath spoken it" (Obad. 17-19).

With the exception of these three nations, which for reasons we have been considering are reserved for punishment at the hands of Israel when back in Palestine, nothing seems to be able to withstand the impetuous onslaught of the king of the north. "He shall stretch forth his hand also upon the countries, and the land of Egypt shall not escape" (Dan. xi. 42). This latter clause seems to imply that the king of the south will be no mean antagonist from a military point of view, while from verse 43 it is plain that there will be a most marvellous development of commercial prosperity in his territory. We have all heard of the goldfields and diamond mines of Africa, and of the rich fertility of great tracts of land in that vast continent; and there are not wanting many who foresee a brilliant future for that great country. Scripture has long since

foretold it in this marvellous forecast of the future.

Man's heart is set upon the acquisition of wealth, and the gold and silver that perishes with the using ; but all these earthly riches fail to satisfy those who possess them, and stir up the cupidity of others who long to obtain them for themselves. So will it be with the king of the north, who, according to this striking prophecy, will for a time succeed. " He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt " (ver. 43).

Happy are they whose portion is not of this world, and who have provided themselves " bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth " (Luke xii. 33). Where the treasure is the heart will be also.

“TIDINGS OUT OF THE EAST AND OUT OF
THE NORTH.”

(DAN. xi. 44, 45.)

IT appears from the prophecies of Isaiah and Zechariah, as well as from the Psalms, that Jerusalem is destined in the future to be twice besieged. The first time the city will be taken by the nations that come up against her ; these will be especially from the north and east, and will be in league with the king of the north ; but the second time these nations will themselves be destroyed, and Jerusalem will be delivered by the Lord, who will interfere in person to this end.

If we turn to Isaiah xxviii., xxix., we shall find a prophetic outline of what will yet take place in and around Jerusalem, which entirely coincides with what we have already seen in the closing verses of Daniel xi. In the first place woe is pronounced upon Ephraim ; this appears to be the outlying portion of the land which the king of the north will enter on his last invasion of Palestine and Egypt. As a “flood of mighty waters overflowing” will he come down upon them, Jehovah using him as His rod of anger for the punishment of the rebellious and hypocritical nation, which at that time will be in a prosperous

condition, so far as material affairs are concerned (Isa. x. 5, 6, xxviii. 3, 4).

From verse 14 it is Jerusalem in particular that comes before us. In order to escape this "overflowing scourge," the apostate rulers of the Jews make their covenant with powers so evil that they can be described in no other way than "death and hell." This covenant is the one we have already had mentioned in Daniel ix. 27; it is the chief of the revived Roman Empire, of Western Europe, who makes it with "the many," that is, the apostate portion of the Jews, who will recognise "the king," or Antichrist, in Jerusalem. The covenant is made for a period of seven years, or the last week of the seventy mentioned in Daniel ix., but in the midst of the week a great crisis is reached in connection with the Jews; their restored sacrifices will be made to cease, and the fearful idolatry of Antichrist will be set up. It is on account of this that the Assyrian, or king of the north, is introduced as the executor of Jehovah's anger against the idolatrous people. If Daniel ix. 27 be read with care, it will be seen that these three persons are distinctly alluded to. "He (*i.e.*, the Roman emperor) shall confirm a covenant with the many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and on account of the overspreading of abominations (*i.e.*, Antichrist's idolatry) there shall be a desolator (*i.e.*, the

king of the north) even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate (*i.e.*, Jerusalem)."

If now we turn to Isaiah xxix., we shall see that so far from this artifice of the scornful rulers of Jerusalem succeeding, the city will be besieged, and at first brought down to desolation (vers. 1-7). It is this that is referred to in Psalm lxxiv., "Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations ; even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary," &c. Again in Psalm lxxix., "O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance ; Thy holy temple have they defiled ; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps." Evidently in these scriptures the city is taken by the besieging confederate nations.

But in the remainder of Isaiah xxix., from verse 7 to the end, a very different state of things is described. There, Jehovah takes up the cause of His people, and all the nations that fight against Mount Zion melt away as a dream of a night vision. It seems clear from this that there are two distinct sieges of Jerusalem in the future, the first successful so far as the nations are concerned, but the second the very reverse : "So shall the Lord of Hosts come down to fight for Mount Zion . . . defending also He will deliver it. . . . Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man"—for it will be through the direct intervention of Jehovah—" . . . and he shall pass over to his stronghold

for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and His furnace in Jerusalem " (Isa. xxxi. 4-9). The next chapter (Isa. xxxii.) goes on to describe the day of millennial blessing which will follow.

The prophet Zechariah gives the same outline with further details. The last three chapters unmistakably point forward to Israel's future. After referring to Messiah's rejection (Zech. xi. 12, 13), we find introduced upon the scene him who will be His direct opposite; the idol shepherd is no doubt the Antichrist that we have been considering under the title of "the king." "I will raise up a shepherd in the land," this can be none other than the land of Palestine. But this false shepherd will not be like the Good Shepherd that layeth down His life for the sheep, for he shall eat the flesh of the fat, and tear their claws in pieces. The whole Church period, from Pentecost to the rapture, is thus passed over in silence, and we step from the nation's rejection of the true Christ to their acceptance of the Antichrist, as was said by the Lord when here on earth, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John v. 43). The idol shepherd of Zechariah xi. is the other one here spoken of.

This brings us down to the circumstances of the last days, and those especially of which Jerusalem will be the centre. Many nations and peoples

will be gathered together against it, and Jerusalem will be by them besieged. These are the nations in league with the king of the north, in other words, the north-eastern confederacy, not the Beast or Roman Empire of the West. But they will find Jerusalem and the affairs of Palestine and the Jews to be like a burdensome stone. It might seem an easy thing for vast and overwhelming numbers to sweep away the small and feeble people of Judea, but in that day shall Jehovah open His eyes upon His beloved people, and defend their cause against their enemies. "And it shall come to pass in that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem" (Zech. xii. 9).

But along with this we are shown the moral work that will take place in the heart and conscience of the people themselves. "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced," &c. There must be on their part a judgment of themselves in the sight of God, and a deep abhorrence of their sin in the rejection of their Messiah (vers. 9-14). Then, and not till then, will the fountain be opened for the practical cleansing of the nation. It is not a "fountain filled with blood," but the washing of the water of the Word. The idols and false prophets will be cleansed out of the land.

Next we are again reminded of that which

Messiah passed through, first at the hands of His own people, and then at the hands of Jehovah. He was wounded in the house of His friends, scourged, smitten, and spat upon; but at the cross it was Jehovah's sword that was stretched out against the man that was His fellow. The immediate effect of the smiting of the Shepherd was the scattering of the sheep (Matt. xxvi. 31), though it was at the same time that that mighty work was accomplished which secured their eternal blessing.

Here again we see how in the Old Testament the whole present period of the Church is passed over in silence; the mystery of the Church, the body of Christ had not been made known in those ages before Pentecost and the calling out of Paul to be the special vessel for communicating this unique and wondrous truth. We pass at one step from the scattering of the Jewish sheep which immediately followed upon the cross (ver. 7), to the judgment that will befall the nation "in all the land" in the last days just before they are recognised once more as Jehovah's people, and their Messiah will come again, not this time in humiliation, but in power and majesty (vers. 8, 9).

It will be a time of unparalleled trouble. Two parts in all the land shall be cut off and die, and the third part shall be brought through the refining fire. The opening verses of chapter xiv. bring together the two future sieges of Jerusalem. All the nations are seen gathered together against

it to battle. These are again the nations in league with the king of the north. At first they are successful, for the city is taken, and half its inhabitants go forth into captivity. But after that, and evidently distinct therefrom, the Lord Himself goes forth to fight on behalf of His people against these nations, and all is changed. He is seen coming in person to the earth; His feet stand upon the Mount of Olives; it is the day of the Lord when He will come, not into the air for the Church, but to the earth for the deliverance of Israel and the judgment of their enemies.

All this throws a flood of light upon the close of Daniel xi. We have seen the king of the north entering into the glorious land and obtaining a measure of success. This no doubt will be the time of the first of these two future sieges of Jerusalem. But he will pass on into Egypt, possibly with a view to crippling the power of the king of the south, which he may think would stand in the way of the accomplishment of his designs upon Palestine and the Jews.

While in Egypt events of the most unexpected nature will be taking place in and around Jerusalem. "Tidings out of the east and out of the north shall trouble him." Some may inquire what the tidings could possibly be that produce such a startling effect upon this hitherto victorious king. They may be twofold; firstly, the commencing movement amongst the

ten long lost tribes to return to Palestine ; secondly, the overthrow of the armies of the West, the beast and the kings of the earth who will be gathered against Jerusalem, to make war upon the Lamb, who, between the two sieges we have been considering, will have come as Redeemer to Zion (Isa. lix. 20).

The direction from whence come these startling tidings should be carefully noted, "out of the east and out of the north," exactly where Palestine lies with reference to Egypt, where the king of the north will at that time be !

With great fury he returns to Palestine, little thinking Who he will have to face. He plants the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, that is, between the Mediterranean and the Dead Seas, in the glorious holy mountain. Here the curtain drops upon all this military magnificence : " He shall come to his end, and none shall help him."

There is nothing in the estimation of the world so glorious as a vast military display, but all this is destined to wither and melt away like Sennacherib's great host, gleaming with purple and gold, which was in truth the type in Isaiah's day of the very scenes here described by the prophet Daniel. How blessed is the portion of those whose kingdom is not of this world. An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away is theirs, when all the glitter and pomp of this poor world lies in the dust.

"A TIME OF TROUBLE."

(DAN. xii.)

AT the close of the previous chapter (xi.) we have brought before us the circumstances of the last days, in so far as they concern the earthly powers that are connected with the land of Palestine. Three kings will be especially in view. In the first place there will be "the king," reigning in Jerusalem, in other words the Antichrist; he is the one described in verses 36 to 40. As we have before pointed out, we get no account here of his end and of the terrible doom that awaits him, when he will be destroyed by the brightness of Christ's coming (2 Thess. ii. ; Rev. xix. 20, 21).

Besides this king there will also be the kings of the north and the south, whose actings have been so vividly depicted from verse 40 to 45. It is the last king of the north who is seen to come to his end with none to help him. He falls upon the mountains of Judæa by the hand of the Lord Himself (Isa. xiv. 25, xxx. 31, xxxi. 8, 9; Micah v. 5, 6).

Now this brings us down to the time of the end, that is, the end of the age spoken of in Matthew xxiv. 3 and elsewhere. This expression has nothing to do with the Christian period, which is a parenthesis in God's earthly

dealings ; it specially refers to the Jews. To these, God's earthly people, there were two ages or dispensations, namely, "this age" and "the age to come" (see Matt. xii. 32), and the expression which we so repeatedly find, for instance in Matthew xiii. and xxiv., "the end of the age," refers, not to the end of the world as a material system, but to the end of that age in which the Jews then found themselves, namely, the age of *law*, as distinguished from "the age to come," or the time of Messiah's presence amongst them ; "this age" will still continue to run its course, after the removal of the Church at the coming of the Lord, for a brief interval until Christ appears in glory.

The Spirit of God now reveals what will be the condition of Daniel's own people, and the circumstances through which they will pass at the close. "At that time," namely, the time of all the occurrences we have been considering at the end of chapter xi., "shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people" (chap. xii. 1). Here we get angelic interference on the behalf of the Jews. It is not yet Messiah's direct and personal appearance on Mount Zion, but Michael, one of the chief princes specially deputed to watch over the interests of that people, who stands up to help them, though unseen either by them or their enemies (compare Dan. x. 13-21 ; Rev. xii. 7, &c.) ; there

are invisible, as well as visible, principalities and powers (Col. ii. 16).

At this same epoch "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation"; this is the great tribulation spoken of elsewhere, or the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. xxx. 7). It is a mistake to suppose that this has anything to do with Christians, or that the Church will pass through this period of tribulation. So far from this being the case, a distinct promise is given that, "because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from (or, *out of*) the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. iii. 10). In other words, the Church will not be found on earth whilst this time of trouble exists. The whole world will feel it, but the Jews will experience it in an especial degree, and that because of their guilt in crucifying their Messiah.

To this period our Lord refers in Matthew xxiv., "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be," connecting it with this very chapter in Daniel we are now considering: "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place," &c. It is this time of unparalleled sorrow that awaits the Jewish people when back in Palestine, and so awful will it be that, "except those days should be

shortened, there should no flesh be saved ; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." That is, God has His eye upon the remnant of His people, and in the midst of judgment He remembers mercy.

Immediately after this terrible period of tribulation, signs and wonders take place amidst the heavenly powers (see Isa. xiii. 10 ; Amos v. 20 ; Acts ii. 20), and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, who will be seen "coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." This is "the day of the Lord" so repeatedly mentioned by the prophets of the Old Testament. It will be the time of deliverance for the godly remnant in Jerusalem, and of destruction for their enemies, gathered together as they will be at that time to make war against the Lamb.

But another question arises here—What has become of the long lost ten tribes? Have they been forgotten entirely? The answer is given in verse 2 of our chapter: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." We must not suppose that this refers to the resurrection of the body ; it is the time of Israel's national resuscitation, which is spoken of elsewhere in the prophets under the symbol of resurrection (see Isa. xxvi. 12-21 ; Ezek. xxxvii. 1-15). The ten tribes are destined to pass through their time of trial before they

reach the land of Palestine. "I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face . . . and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me. I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel" (Ezek. xx. 33-45).

Next we are informed that a special reward will be bestowed upon those who amidst this time of trial not only remain faithful themselves, but who exert their influence towards instructing their fellows in that line of conduct which is well-pleasing to God: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many (or *instruct the many*) to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever" (ver. 3).

But the time of the end was not yet, and Daniel is told to "shut up the words and seal the book, to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." We cannot but be struck with the contrast between this and the Apocalypse, where John is distinctly told not to seal the sayings of the prophecy of the book for the time was near (Rev. xxii. 10). For the Church the coming of the Lord is an immediate hope, whereas for the Jews certain prophecies *must* be fulfilled before He can come as their Messiah to take His place amongst them in power to reign.

After this Daniel looks and sees two standing by the banks of the river, besides the man clothed in linen (chap. x. 4-6). One of these asks, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" in other words, How long should this time of great tribulation last? The answer was plain, "It shall be for a time, times, and an half." This is the three years and a half, or the last half of the seventieth week alluded to at the close of the ninth chapter. We are not left therefore in the smallest doubt as to when this takes place, nor to whom it all refers. It refers to the Jews (not to Christians), during the last half of the seventieth week, when they will have sunk so low as to allow the awful idolatry of Antichrist to be set up in the temple.

Daniel further asks, "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" but the time was not come for a much fuller revelation. Here again the contrast is emphasised between the condition of the saints of that dispensation, however godly as surely Daniel was, and the Church. We "have an unction from the Holy One," says the apostle John, "and know all things" (1 John ii. 20); this was addressed even to the babes in the Christian family. Piety there was in Old Testament times, and none can make light of the need of it now, nevertheless what specially characterises the saint of the present time is the actual possession of the Holy Ghost as an indwelling Spirit. But in the time

to come "the wise shall understand." It is remarkable what a place these "wise" ones hold in this forecast of Israel's future. "None of the wicked shall understand," no matter how intelligent in earthly matters they may be; the intelligence here spoken of is a moral and not a merely intellectual one.

The man clothed in linen had announced that the duration of the time of tribulation would be $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, or 1,260 days. But now two further numbers are given, namely, 1,290 days and 1,335 days. What, we may ask, does all this refer to? In the first place it is of the utmost importance to understand that these days have to do with the period that follows the removal of the Church at the coming of the Lord. It is vain to attempt any application of them to the present time, or to any portion of the Christian age. It is here where so many have got astray in their endeavours to fix the time of the coming of the Lord for His saints.

What is the starting point of the calculation? This is clearly stated in verse 11, "From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up." But when will this be? It has nothing to do with the Turks or the scourge of Islamism. It is undoubtedly what is referred to in Daniel ix. 27, namely, the breaking off of the covenant which the Roman emperor will make with the Jewish people in the time to come, and the

setting up of Antichrist's idolatry in the temple at Jerusalem. The tribulation which God will send upon the Jews on account of this fearful idolatry will last for $3\frac{1}{2}$ years, or 1,260 days.

But the complete and final blessing of Israel does not take place immediately thereafter. The Antichrist will then be destroyed, no doubt, but other wicked powers have to be disposed of after that, such as the king of the north, Gog and Magog (Ezek. xxxviii., xxxix.),* and others of less importance. This will take a certain time, brief no doubt, for it is clear from Scripture that the king of the north comes to his end after the destruction of Antichrist, for this latter is destroyed by the appearing of the Lord, and the former returns from Egypt to Palestine *after* the Lord has come to Zion. The judgment of Gog and Magog is later even than this. We do not mean to say that the 1,290 days and the 1,335 days allude to these two in particular, but enough has been said to suggest the reason for a prolongation of the days. Full blessing is reached after the 1,335 days. It has often been observed that Daniel does not enlarge upon the millennial period. No description is given by him of this blessed time, for it was his special business to write of "the times of the Gentiles."

* See "Russia's Destiny according to Prophecy," by the author. James Carter, 13 Paternoster Row, London, E.C. Price 6d.

Nevertheless he is assured that he shall stand in his lot at the end of the days. He will not be absent when that glorious scene is unfolded.

For us better things are provided, but this is no reason why we should in the smallest degree minimise the promises made to the fathers, which, seen even afar off, made them start forth in faith towards that better country, and that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

With greater privileges and higher blessings do we not oftentimes exhibit a colder and more indolent spirit?

“O kindle within us a holy desire,

Like that which was found in Thy people of old,
Who tasted Thy love, and whose hearts were on fire
While they waited in patience Thy face to behold!”

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